



Making space for wildlife

Our BBC Gardeners' World Live display

Turning the tide
A strategy to save our seas

Return of the natives
How Hardy's heathland is being revived

Waterways oscars
Why canal haven is a natural winner

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English Nature is the statutory body that achieves, enables and promotes nature conservation in England. We do so by working in partnership with individuals and a wide range of organisations, including Government.

We publish English Nature Magazine six times a year. The views expressed in it by individuals are not necessarily those of English Nature.

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We also have offices across the country, where our staff deal with local nature conservation issues. You can find details of your nearest office by ringing our national office (above) or from our Facts and Figures leaflet. This is free from our Enquiry Service, tel: 01733 455100 or email: enquiries@english-nature.org.uk

You can also find out more about us from our website: www.english-nature.org.uk

Cover picture

A natural garden from BBC Gardeners' World Live 2004 (Wildlife Gardening, p7-10)

To get tickets for this year's show, call 0870 060 3780

Although English Nature magazine does not have a regular letters page, I am always interested in receiving feedback about the magazine, or letters on subjects that may be of interest to our readers. If there is a subject that you feel would be relevant to our readership, please write to me or email me, and I will certainly consider publishing your letter in the magazine.

Contact me, Amanda Giles, at English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA, or at amanda.giles@english-nature.org.uk

If you would like to add or remove your name from our mailing list for this magazine, please contact Alison Eley, IMT, English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA or email: alison.eley@english-nature.org.uk.

New agency is named

Natural England, for people, places and nature

The Rural Strategy 2004 announced the Government's intention to establish a single independent public body comprising of English Nature, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation Division.

The proposals for the creation of this new body are in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill currently progressing through Parliament. In early April, Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett announced that Natural England would be the name of this agency. Its strapline, summarising the ethos of the organisation, will be "for people, places and nature."

The name was chosen from a list of over 350 submitted by the public, key partners and businesses plus the staff of the three organisations.

In a letter to staff, Mrs Beckett said, "The creation of Natural England will, for the first time, unite in a single organisation, responsibility for enhancing biodiversity and our landscapes in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas, and for promoting access, recreation and public well-being. It will be a body greater than the sum of its parts: a stronger, more powerful organisation able to face challenges now and in the future."

Cutting-edge deal protects orchids

Green-winged orchids will continue to flourish on the mansion terraces of Scotney Castle, Kent, this summer, after English Nature agreed a management plan with the National Trust, which owns the site.

English Nature Conservation Officer, Pauline Harvey, explained, "The site is part of the Scotney Castle SSSI and the terraces offer superb grassland for the green-winged orchids, providing one of the top two sites for this species in Kent. We got together and reached an agreement, which will see the terraces retained as hay meadow for a few months and mown later in the year to conserve the historic setting of the mansion. The cuttings will be strewn on other grassland on the site to improve it."

The National Trust will monitor orchid numbers to assess the scheme's success.

Green-winged orchid

Three appointed to top team

Three new members have been appointed to English Nature's Council in the run-up to the creation of Natural England.

Minister for Nature Conservation and Fisheries, Ben Bradshaw, confirmed the three-year appointments of Sarah Burton, a legal consultant, Lynn Crowe, a University Principal lecturer in ecology and leisure management, and Christopher Pennell, a former Regional Director of the National Trust.

The appointments run to 31 March 2008.

English Nature's Chair, Sir Martin Doughty, said, "It is a pleasure to

welcome the new members to the Council and I look forward to working with them over the next three years. Moving English Nature into Natural England in 2007 will be an incredibly important time for the Council."

Serving members, Dr Mike Moser, Stephen Hockman, Douglas Hulyer and Hugh van Cutsem, have been re-appointed to the Council for a further three-year term. Dr Moser's appointment as Deputy Chair has been extended. We would like to thank Anne Kelaart and Tom Burke who left at the end of March, for all their good work.

Summer call to seek out waterways wildlife

Mute swan

More than half the population of England live within five miles of a canal.

This summer people are being asked to help monitor the wildlife on their local waterways. The National Waterway Wildlife Survey, happening in June, July, and August, is a joint venture between British Waterways and English Nature.

Last year 1,100 sightings recorded 60 different species, including water voles, bats and otters. Download a colourful guide which children can use to go swan spotting from www.waterscape.com/wildlife.

Views on GM crop trial results

English Nature has given an initial reaction, on behalf of the UK statutory conservation agencies, to the latest results of the Farm Scale Evaluations of GM crops. The experiments were carried out in response to concerns that commercial growing of GM herbicide-tolerant maize, oilseed rape, and beet could further damage wildlife.

Dr Brian Johnson, Biotechnological Adviser to the conservation agencies, said, "The results show that, overall, there was less biodiversity in the fields of GM oilseed rape. Although there was increased biodiversity early in the

season, after the herbicide was applied, most of the weeds were effectively removed. This meant there was less food available for insects and birds.

"If farmers use this crop, the results indicate there could be further damage to our already depleted wildlife on arable fields, so we will be advising Government that it should not be commercialised."

The statutory conservation agencies are now examining the results in more detail and will give their formal opinion to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment in due course.

Editorial

It's May, and harbingers of spring are all around us. Cow parsley and hawthorn blossom sit luminous on hedgerows, while bluebell and wild garlic glow in the woods. Buttercups, celandine, campion and cowslip – it is a riot of colour out there in the countryside.

But I get a kick out of the colour and heady scent in my garden too, which is a mixture of the wild and the non-wild. Lilac blossom, wallflowers, wisteria and tulips, mix happily with native hawthorn, crab apple, foxgloves and forget-me-nots. I love this intermingling of garden and countryside, and so, it seems, do our wild visitors. Brimstone butterflies, bumble bees and bats, ladybirds, frogs, and an occasional fallow deer, swifts, swallows, and far too many slugs, are amongst the many we welcome.

With a little thought, planning and not much effort, any garden can be transformed into a welcoming, friendly environment to attract wildlife.

I hope you can come to our stand at the BBC Gardeners' World Live Show at the NEC in June. Pages 8 and 9 show you what you can see there, from bog garden to vegetable patch, willow den to wormery. We look at climate change on page 11, and how it affects what grows in our countryside and gardens. And on page 10 you can read about what our staff in Somerset get up to in the office garden at lunchtimes!

We're on the coast on pages 4 and 5, and on the heath on pages 14 and 15. These, as well as our regular features, I hope you enjoy reading.

Amanda Giles

Turning the tide to save our seas

Duddon Estuary, Cumbria

Paul Glendell/English Nature

An action plan has been unveiled to safeguard the future of our coastlines. English Nature's maritime strategy *Our Coasts and Seas – Making Space for People, Industry and Wildlife* is the result of two years of discussions with the hundreds of people who use our coasts and seas for business, recreation and conservation.

The strategy highlights serious concerns that the quality of our coasts and seas continues to decline, with numbers and diversity of marine life significantly altered by man's activities. It concludes that in order to "turn the tide", we must take action now on issues ranging from over-fishing and unco-ordinated development to the disappearance of coastal habitats that buffer the land from rising sea levels.

Helen Rae, English Nature's Maritime Strategy Project Manager, said, "As part of an island nation, England is fortunate to have such a rich maritime heritage and the health of our coasts and seas directly affects our quality of life. But despite a number of initiatives, there is still a great deal of pressure on these fragile ecosystems and we are still seeing further decline. It is vital that we act now to ensure recovery of these precious habitats."

English Nature is recommending a three-pronged approach based around:

- new legislation to create a network of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs)
- a move from coastal defence to coastal management
- effective marine spatial planning

We are promoting an approach that looks after whole ecosystems instead of focusing on individual habitats and species. The **MCPA** network will include areas with different levels of protection, with 20–30 per cent protected from all damaging commercial or recreational activities. This will give more protection to both rare and common species and allow exploited species to recover. It will help to create a healthier, more resilient marine environment, and a more robust and sustainable fishing industry.

If we are to move from a coastal defence to a **coastal management** approach, we will need to take account of the changes currently affecting our dynamic coasts. Climate change is causing sea levels to rise, bringing more frequent and more powerful storms. Habitats like saltmarshes and intertidal

mudflats, protect us from the sea and support important wildlife, such as dunlin, redshank and black-tailed godwit which rely on these habitats for food and shelter. They are being squeezed out between inappropriate developments and old, high-maintenance sea defences. The UK is currently losing about 100 ha of saltmarsh a year.

Our fragile coastlines are under ever-increasing pressure with marine habitats squeezed between new developments and old sea defences. Rising sea levels brought by climate change accelerate the threat.

Marine spatial planning will help balance conflicting uses while protecting ever-more congested seas. At present, there is no overview of applications for potentially harmful activities. "For instance," said Helen, "if bids for a windfarm, port expansion and gravel dredging in one spot were being considered, at the same time, by separate decision-makers, there

would be no way of assessing their cumulative effect."

If we achieve the aims laid down in the strategy, new developments would be built in appropriate locations, we would have improved water quality, recovering fish stocks and healthier seas. Our marine environment and its wildlife would be

better able to cope with climate change and other factors outside our direct control, and people living on the coast would be better equipped to adapt to long-term change.

The full report can be viewed or downloaded on www.english-nature.org.uk/science/coasts_and_seas/default.asp

Navigating to harmony in the Humber

The Humber Estuary is one of Europe's most important coastal sites because of its vast array of wildlife.

It is also home to over 300,000 people and is a bustling commercial centre, supporting five large ports, the country's largest petro-chemical complex and quality farmland. Balancing these needs was never going to be an easy task.

But a landmark decision by English Nature's Council has seen the estuary confirmed as England's third biggest Site of Special Scientific Interest – offering a shining example of how better planning, a partnership approach and sound management can enable all these elements to coexist in harmony.

The importance of the estuary has long been recognised, but it was previously made up of 10 separate SSSIs. Most of the 37,000 ha site was designated a Special Protection Area under the European Birds Directive and a Ramsar site under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

English Nature's Humber Estuary Designations Project carried out a

massive consultation involving around 350 individuals and organisations and came up with streamlined designations to better reflect the nature of the complex ecosystem. The result was the amalgamation of seven SSSIs and the inclusion of new areas to create a single "super-SSSI". This has been selected as a possible Special Area of Conservation under the European Habitats Directive.

Kate Jennings, English Nature's Humber Estuary Designations Project Manager said, "The whole estuary is one big ecosystem, with all its habitats and species inextricably linked."

"Decaying matter from intertidal reedbeds feeds millions of animals in the mud and sand flats. Underwater they provide a ready food supply for the 80 fish species, then as the tide turns, a feast for 150,000 over-wintering and migrating birds including knot, dark-bellied brent geese and golden plover."

Making changes on this scale had potential to cause conflict in an area serving such varied interests. One of the major businesses, port operator, Associated British Ports (ABP), had some concerns. But ABP and the English Nature team set up a working group to discuss the implications. The outcome was a Memorandum of Understanding ensuring that ABP can operate in an environmentally-friendly manner, with the minimum of red tape.

ABP has also committed to creating 57 ha of mudflat and saltmarsh, and six ha of grassland to replace habitats likely to be damaged by its expansion plans. This means waders and wildfowl can keep on using the estuary as a filling station during their migrations.



Spurn Head NNR, a sand spit habitat in the Humber Estuary SSSI

ABP's Environment Manager, Peter Barham, said, "Balancing the needs of all parties on such a large and complex site is essential, but can be very difficult to achieve. Naturally, we had some concerns, but we've welcomed closer working with English Nature and feel this enlightened approach will not only enable us to meet our business needs but also to be a good neighbour to the estuary's special wildlife."

Factfile

- The Humber estuary has 200km of shoreline.
- It has an intertidal area of 12,000 ha.
- It is one of the UK's top six bird sites and one of Europe's top 10.
- Over 154,000 waterfowl visit each year.
- Breeding birds include marsh harriers, bitterns, little terns and avocet.

Rolling forward

The new strategy builds on the findings of our 2002 Maritime State of Nature report. It supports a number of other initiatives like the Government's Marine Stewardship process; Defra's developing Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy; the England Biodiversity Strategy; and the Review of Marine Nature Conservation.

Gardening with wildlife in mind

Chris Gibson



Poached egg plant

Book Review

The Wildlife Pond Handbook
Louise Bardsley. New Holland. £12.99

If you're thinking of building a pond, buy this book now.

It is full of superb pictures and everything you need to know about designing and siting your pond, digging and lining it and selecting the right plants to create a wildlife haven. There are sections on the birds, beetles and other beasts which will soon colonise the water.

The handbook, available from most good bookshops, costs £12.99. £1 from every sale goes to the conservation charity The Wildlife Trusts.

Steve Berry

Gardens can be glorious in May and June. Steve Berry offers some topical tips.

- Make sure your garden is hedgehog-friendly. Remove hazards like loose netting. Ensure that your pond has at least one area that slopes gently to the water: hedgehogs may come to drink.
- Try hard to be nicer to slugs! Poisonous pellets can kill all sorts of creatures besides slugs. Instead, use beer traps, nematodes, gravel or one of the other 50 or more weapons described in *The Little Book of Slugs*, compiled by the Centre for Alternative Technology. (Tel 01654 705 950.) Encourage slug predators – hedgehogs, song thrushes, slow-worms, frogs and toads.
- Several species of hoverflies are common in gardens, most of them with a basic stripy pattern of black and yellow or orange. They are much smaller than wasps, and valuable to gardeners as their larvae eat aphids. Hoverflies like open, flat-topped flowers including cow parsley, fennel, Michaelmas and ox-eye daisy. Poached egg plant is another hoverfly favourite.
- Swifts are returning from Africa but in far smaller numbers these days. A major problem is new building techniques which have deprived them of nest sites. Visit www.concernforswifts.com to see how you can help.

Stars come out for wild celebration

TV presenter Nick Baker, of *The Really Wild Show*, and fitness guru Mr Motivator will spread the word on “Waking up to Wildlife” as part of a two-week celebration of our Local Nature Reserves.

From Saturday, 16 July, to Sunday, 31 July, English Nature is holding events on LNRs around the country to encourage more people to explore and enjoy these national treasures.

Hazel Hynds, English Nature's People and Nature Communications Officer, said, “Getting close to wildlife can be good for both your physical and mental wellbeing and LNRs offer the perfect setting to do this within easy reach of most people's homes. We hope as many

people as possible will join us for these celebrations and discover how much LNRs have to offer.”

A highlight of the celebrations will be a major event on Sunday, 17 July, at Sheffield's Shire Brook Valley LNR, a green oasis in the centre of five urban areas, with woodlands, ancient hedgerows and meadows, lowland heathland, ponds and marshland.

Mr Motivator will lead a Wild Workout before heading up a healthy walk around the reserve. Visitors may be able to glimpse the water voles, harvest mice, great crested newts and badgers that live there, or could even come face to face with the highland cattle that graze on the site during the summer.



Nick Baker

There will also be chance to join the BBC's Nick Baker, for a close-up experience with the reserve's inhabitants. Children and adults will be able to take part in a range of sporting activities, arts and crafts.

©Nick Baker

Roger Key

Making space for wildlife

English Nature will be encouraging people to make space for wildlife during the BBC's Gardeners' World Live 2005 exhibition in June.

A damp shady spot with abundant vegetation provides the perfect haven

This is our fifth year at the show held at Birmingham NEC from 15 to 19 June. We will be welcoming visitors to our innovative stand in Hall 6, which will have an urban garden wildlife theme. A range of exciting displays and activities, including a block of flats, will demonstrate what people can do for wildlife and what wildlife can do for them.

There will be new interactive features for children and adults to learn more about nature conservation and lots of leaflets to take away.

English Nature Events Manager, Janet Lippiatt, said, “Our aim is to show visitors how wildlife can thrive just about anywhere, from a window box to a meadow. No matter what size your garden is, English Nature wants you to make some space for wildlife.”

Last year the English Nature stand won the award for Best Contribution to Environmental and Conservation Issues and we hope visitors will enjoy this year's experience just as much.

Find out what there is to see and do with our illustrated plan on the centre pages (pages 8 and 9) of this issue.

Living exhibit makes history

Visitors will find out how to create their own wildlife haven during the second Wildlife Gardening Conference and Fayre at the Natural History Museum.

The event, on Saturday, 11 June, is run by members of the London Biodiversity Partnership and should appeal to everyone, from experts keen to learn more scientific facts to gardeners simply wanting to attract more wildlife. There will be an English Nature stall and our People and Wildlife Manager, Steve Berry, will talk to conference guests about the value of wildlife gardening.

The fayre takes place in front of the museum alongside its Wildlife Garden.

This summer sees the 10th anniversary of the Wildlife Garden, a green oasis in a corner of bustling Chelsea and Kensington. Opened in July 1995 with the help of a £50,000 grant from English Nature, it was designed as the Museum's first living exhibition. It gives examples of British lowland habitats and shows how wildlife-friendly areas can be created in urban surroundings.

Since then, the garden has blossomed. English Nature and the museum were keen to monitor its success, so all new plants and animals moving in have been recorded. Around 2,000 organisms have been noted, including 470 species of moths and butterflies and 350 beetle species.

The bird population increases annually, with chaffinch and dunnock arriving to breed for the first time last year and a pair of long-tailed tits nesting inside a gorse bush. Mammals include pipistrelle bats, squirrels and wood mice as well as the urban fox.



Derek Adams / NHM Image Resources

Six-spot burnet moth

Volunteers play an essential role, from coppicing and pollarding woodland areas, to caring for sheep that graze grassland areas in summer.

Wildlife Garden Manager, Caroline Ware, said, “It is a privilege and a pleasure to work with so many dedicated people and share special moments such as the arrival of the first moorhen chicks and the discovery of humming-bird hawk moths buzzing among chalk downland plants.”

All are welcome at the fayre but conference places are limited and have to be booked. For information see www.nhm.ac.uk/museum/garden.

What to see on our BBC Gardeners' World Live stand



Urban wildlife:
A swift

1 COMMUNITY CORNER

With our help, wildlife can thrive anywhere, not just in the countryside. Whether you live in a block of flats or have a spacious garden, you can set aside a little bit of space for nature.



Rosemary

2 SENSORY GARDEN

Plants stimulate all our senses promoting health and wellbeing. Visitors can run their hands through a raised bed of plants and flowers chosen specially for their scent, colour and feel, to appreciate the textures and release the smells. Grasses, aromatic plants like lavender, colourful scented leaf pelargoniums, lilies and a herb garden offer an enriching experience as well as attracting minibeasts.



Earthworm

3 THE WORMERY

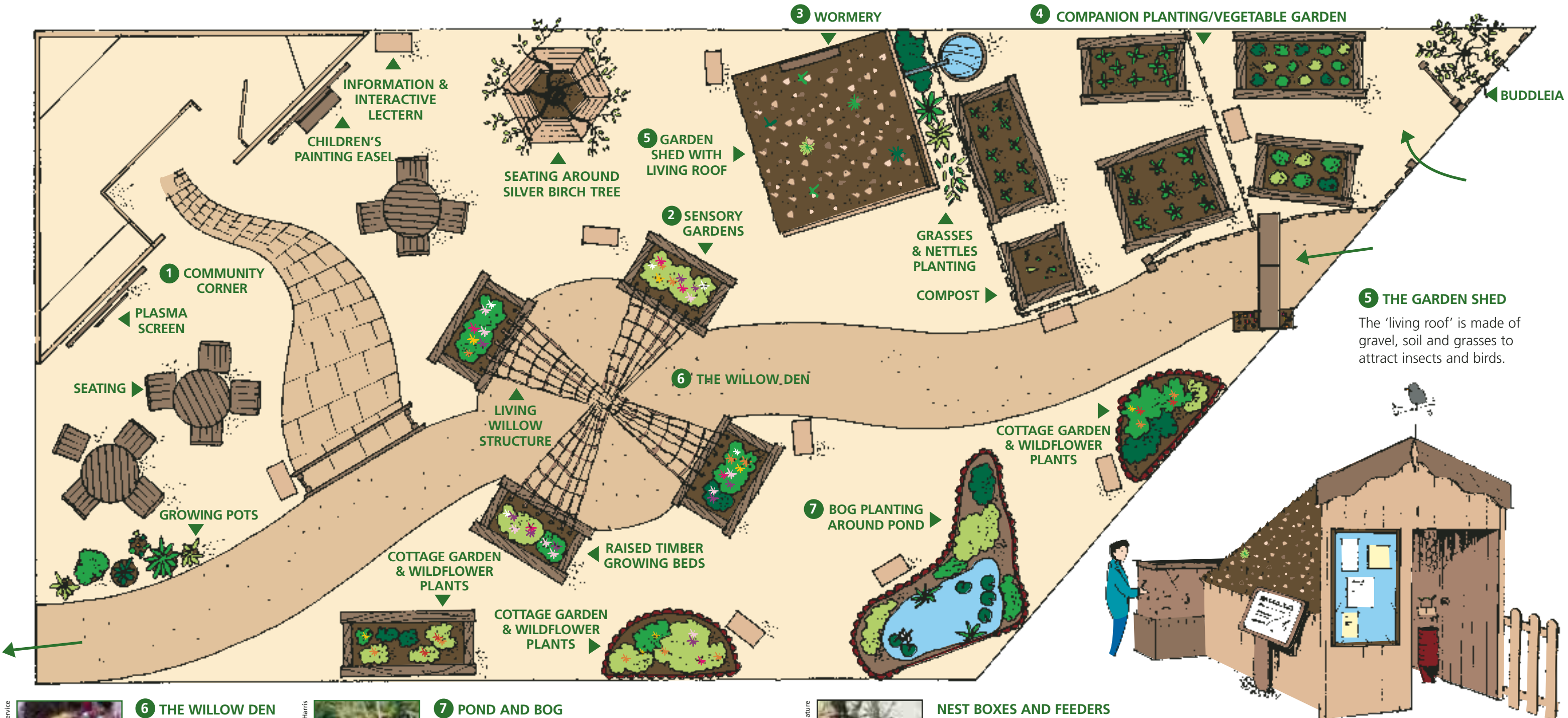
An interactive feature to find out what worms do in your garden: Watch them moving through the different layers of soil.



Marmalade Hoverfly

4 COMPANION PLANTING/VEGETABLE GARDEN

English Nature promotes natural gardening, without chemicals, which damage the environment. Instead, see how 'companion plants' discourage harmful pests. Planting annuals like nasturtiums and marigolds among your vegetables attracts beneficial insects, like ladybirds and hoverflies, which eat aphids. In the vegetable garden traditional and unusual varieties from broad beans to mizuna, are in raised beds, which are accessible to everyone.



Arts and crafts

6 THE WILLOW DEN

A secret place where children can use arts and crafts to help them get a real feel for nature.



Common frog

7 POND AND BOG

The pond – a great way to attract wildlife – is extended this year to include a bog garden. It features native marshland plants that do not thrive in open water, and provides shelter and a hunting ground for amphibians.

If you are short of space place a container in your garden, such as an old enamel or china sink. Add a few stones at one end, so frogs and toads can get out easily.



Low level nest box

NEST BOXES AND FEEDERS

Attract wildlife like birds, hedgehogs and insects to your garden with a range of nest boxes, feeders and insect boxes.

"By having plenty of variety in the structure of our gardens, we provide the greatest number of options for visiting and resident wildlife."

Lunch dates at the bird table

Lunchtimes have never been the same in English Nature's Roughmoor office since some of the team got involved in a little extra-curricular activity.

They decided to register their office garden with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Garden Birdwatch scheme, which has thousands of volunteers monitoring the birds that visit their gardens.

The Taunton team's "lunch break birders" spend an hour or so each week counting the birds, while Conservation Officer, Bob Corns, keeps the bird feeders well stocked.

Since joining the scheme a year ago, they have recorded more than 40 species, including goldfinch, brambling, whitethroat, buzzard, kestrel, plus green and great spotted woodpeckers. They noted several declining species – with one or two, like the linnet, even listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Botanical Adviser Simon Leach explained, "This was too good an opportunity to miss. We have a fantastic garden and had already put

up bird feeders, so we felt it would be good to contribute to a worthwhile project aimed at finding out what is happening nationally to our garden bird populations.

"It also gives deskbound staff an opportunity to get out and enjoy the wildlife on their doorstep. The garden supports fungi such as the BAP-listed ballerina waxcap (*Hygrocybe calyptraeformis*), and there is an orchard with some unusual fruit varieties including old apple trees, two west country mazzards (cherries) and an ancient medlar.

"But the Garden Birdwatch scheme isn't just for people working in conservation – anyone with a garden, of whatever size, can join in."

Team members also support the UK Phenology Network, run by the Woodland Trust, to track the impact of climate change on the timing of

seasonal events in the natural world. This spring they have been recording the bud-burst and leafing of trees, first flowering of wild flowers like bluebell and primrose, first sightings of frogspawn, butterflies and bumble bees and arrival dates of summer migrants like house martins and swifts.

Mark Taylor, a regional Review of Consents Officer, based at Roughmoor, said, "Nearby farmland is being developed into a park-and-ride car park by Somerset County Council, while another field is being made into a new wetland area. We will be interested to see what changes occur among our garden birds as a result."

Anyone interested in joining a monitoring scheme can find out more about BTO Garden Birdwatch on www.bto.org/gbw or the UK Phenology Network on www.phenology.org.uk.

Mark Taylor



Simon (left) and Bob fill up the bird feeders

Coping with climate change

Most people will have noticed the changes taking place in our countryside these days. Migratory birds like swallows arrive earlier and leave later, while dragonflies, crickets and stick insects are spreading northwards.

Hugh Clark/EPA



Swallows are arriving earlier

In our gardens we are experiencing fewer frosts, earlier springs, hotter, drier summers and droughts, higher year-round temperatures and increased winter rainfall and flooding.

All this is down to climate change, the most significant threat facing our environment today.

Over the next 50 years, the traditional English cottage garden and lawn could become a thing of the past. While a warmer climate allows new, often exotic, plants to thrive, many herbaceous species like aster, delphinium, lupin and phlox, which need fertile and moist soils, will not easily adapt. And prolonged waterlogging can weaken and kill tree roots.

In the wider countryside, the effects of climate change are expected to become more apparent and extensive. In south east England, characteristic beech woodlands could disappear by 2050. Along our coasts, sea level rises and increased storms are changing landscapes and threatening habitats. Up to 75 per cent of our salt marshes could be lost by 2100 (See Maritime Strategy page 4).

English Nature's climate change adviser Mike Harley said, "Efforts are being made to reduce climate change, through measures like cutting greenhouse gas emissions, but it is clear that we now face at least 50 years of accumulated change which we can not prevent. So we must take action, with our partners from across Europe, to make sure our wildlife can respond and adapt.

"We need to recreate habitats in fragmented landscapes to give wildlife space to move and to help species to build robust, resilient populations. We have to work across the whole countryside, rather than concentrate on keeping existing habitats where and as they are."

The issue is high on the agenda this year, as the UK takes the G8 and EU Presidencies. English Nature has played a major role since 1998, supporting scientific research into climate change impacts and working with decision-makers on appropriate planning policies.

What we are doing to help

- We are collaborating with UK and Irish Partners on MONARCH 3 (a partnership project looking at impact on terrestrial wildlife) to produce maps of potential habitat and species distribution over the next 50 years.
- We are involved in MarClim and the new Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership – projects looking at the impact on marine wildlife.
- During the UK's EU Presidency, we will, in partnership with sister agencies, Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, host the annual conference of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils. The themes are biodiversity and climate change, adapting to protect habitats and species, and ecosystem resilience.
- We are the lead partner in BRANCH – a new project guiding policymakers to help wildlife respond to climate change. (See below)

FACTFILE:

BRANCH: (Biodiversity Requires Adaptations in North West Europe under a Changing Climate)

- Aims to identify, develop and promote ways to plan space for wildlife in a changing climate.
- Will collate good practice in planning policy and protected area management so climate change is an integral part of the planning process at all levels.

It is part-funded under the INTERREG IIIB North West Europe Programme – part of the European Regional Development Fund and brings together partners from the UK, the Netherlands and France.

For further information contact:
claudia.chambers@english-nature.org.uk

Nature by design

Derak Adams/NHM Image Resources

Gardens designed by English Nature will be opening in every one of Notcutts' garden centres in June, to show people how to attract wildlife.

Each display has a mown lawn, a patio and flowerbeds – proving that a wildlife garden doesn't have to be unkempt.

There are bird feeders, nest boxes and many plants that provide nectar for bees.

Perennials like Achillea, will attract hoverflies which keep aphids in check.

Michael Cole, Notcutts Director explained, "We want to demonstrate that people have a choice. If they want to carry on gardening in the conventional way, we can supply them with all their needs. But if they would like to look at more wildlife-friendly alternatives, then we can still help them."

Bumble bee on purple loosestrife flower



FOCUS ON... Gait Barrows NNR

One of England's most impressive expanses of limestone pavement can be seen at Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve at the very northern tip of Lancashire.

Rob Petley-Jones



Limestone pavement at Gait Barrows

Access for everyone

Less able people and wheelchair users can enjoy the reserve's Hawes Water Trail where access has been improved with a specially constructed boardwalk offering views over the lake and the chance to enjoy the flowers of the fringing grasslands. There is easy access to the first sections of the Limestone and Yew Trails but the terrain further on is unsuitable for less able people.

Rob Petley-Jones



Bird watching on the all-access track

Favourite walks:

- The Limestone Trail visits the open limestone pavements and tells the tale of recovery following their near loss.
- The Yew Trail leads through the ancient and mysterious yew forests in Thrang Wood and the butterfly-rich limestone grasslands.
- The Hawes Water Trail treads carefully through the sensitive marl grasslands with their delicate wild flowers like bird's-eye primrose, and around the reed-fringed edge of Hawes Water with its interesting birds.

How to get there

Gait Barrows NNR is a mile from Silverdale train station, and the Carnforth Connect 'Limestone Link' bus service passes by the entrance to the nature reserve regularly on Sundays throughout the year.

The reserve is five miles from Junction 35 of the M6. There is limited car parking and secure bicycle racks are provided. For more information: Call 01539 531 604 or e-mail: rob.petley-jones@english-nature.org.uk

The reserve's rich mosaic of limestone habitats supports a diversity of animal and plant species unrivalled in the north of England. The limestone pavements are home to scarce plants including the angular Solomon's-seal (best seen in June) and various ferns like the rigid buckler fern as well as one of Britain's rarest snails, the tiny narrow-mouthed whorl snail.

Rob Petley-Jones



High brown fritillary

Gait Barrows NNR, at the heart of the Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB), is also renowned for its butterflies. There are 35 species breeding regularly. Visit in May or June to see the nationally declining Duke of Burgundy and in July or August for the very rare high brown fritillary.

The reserve was established in 1977 to preserve the limestone pavements, and has grown to include the ancient yew woodland of Thrang Wood and Hawes Water, the largest natural lake in Lancashire with its surrounding reed beds and flower-rich fens. The woodlands are dominated by ancient yew trees, and are rich in fungi like the hedgehog puffball and earth star. They also contain hundreds of wood ant nests.

Hawes Water is home to birds like great crested grebe, little grebe, reed bunting and sedge warbler. The reed beds support water rails and attract marsh harriers and, very occasionally, bittern from nearby Leighton Moss Nature Reserve.

Site Manager Rob Petley-Jones said, "Gait Barrows is one of the most magical places I know. Having cared for this nature reserve for 13 years, I still find myself enthralled and surprised by its natural beauty and its continually exciting wildlife. There is always something new to experience and Gait Barrows offers a truly rewarding experience, no matter what time of year or how often you visit."

The reserve welcomes educational trips and children can follow the Yew Trail with a work sheet 'Around Gait Barrows with Arnie Ant'.

English Nature has produced a free illustrated guide to Gait Barrows NNR which is available from the Site Manager on 01539 531 604.

Celebrating nature

Twenty miles west of Gait Barrows is the Roudsea Wood and Mosses NNR which celebrates its Golden Jubilee in June.

There will be a series of celebratory events and on 18 June Lord and Lady Cavendish of Furness, the owners of Roudsea Wood, will open new Jubilee nature trails, and a visitors' trail booklet will be launched. From June to mid-September Lord and Lady Cavendish will host an exhibition at their home, nearby Holker Hall, of Roudsea Wood photographs taken by students from Blackpool and the Fylde College.

There will be visitor events in Roudsea Wood from May to December, with guided walks led by local experts and English Nature staff. These are free, but places must be booked.

Over the past 50 years, English Nature has leased more and more woodland from the Holker Estate, extending the NNR to include surrounding raised mires and salt marshes.

It is a survey site for ancient woodlands and renowned as the most important woodland in northern England for dormice. Roudsea Wood is currently the survey site for a major study on one of our typical woodland birds, the marsh tit.

- Roudsea Wood is 20 miles from Gait Barrows NNR along the A590. It is two miles south of Haverthwaite and four miles north of Holker Hall.
- There is a small car park. The express bus from Kendal to Barrow stops at Haverthwaite. The Cumbria Coastal Path and Cumbria Cycleway both pass the NNR entrance.
- Visiting is by permit only, available from the Site Manager on 01539 531 604.



Rob Petley-Jones

Raft spider – seen from the boardwalks over raised mires

WHAT'S ON? GUIDE

JUNE – JULY

JUNE
19

Golden Jubilee Open Day

11.00, Roudsea Wood and Mosses NNR, Cumbria. Join in the celebrations, including guided walks, fun activities and chance to meet the reserve's wildlife. No parking on the reserve, but free parking provided nearby with free bus service to NNR. All welcome, but dogs must be on leads.

Contact Rob Petley-Jones
On 01539 531 604

JUNE
14

Flag Fen Environment Day

10.00–18.00, Flag Fen, Peterborough Events, talks, and after-school activities at this Bronze Age archaeological site.

Pick up a copy of Flag Fen, a Natural History, a new leaflet by English Nature's Paul Lacey describing the relationship between our ancestors and the plants and animals living there.

Contact Flag Fen
On 01733 313414

JULY
3–6

The Royal Show

Sun–Tues 09.00–19.00, Weds 09.00–18.00 Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

English Nature, RDS and The Countryside Agency will have a joint stand focusing on Environmental Stewardship. If you have any questions come and see us at stand RB1 in the Rural Business and Conference Centre.

For information on more events, visit: www.english-nature.org.uk/events.asp

Bird book bargain

English Nature magazine readers are being offered the chance to order copies of *Birds in England* from A&C Black at a discount price of £35, a saving of £5, with free p&p in the UK.

The book is written by our Head of Ornithology, Andy Brown, and Senior Ornithologist, Phil Grice, and is published in conjunction with English Nature.

To order, call 01256 302692 or email mdl@macmillan.co.uk and quote code GLR B76 by 31 July.



Return of the natives: Restoring our heathland habitats



Richard Elston

FACTFILE:

Since 1800 more than 80 per cent of lowland heath has been lost, making it rarer than rainforest.

The UK is responsible for safeguarding nearly a fifth of the world's remaining heathland.

Many heathlands are designated as Natura 2000 sites, established to protect species and habitats listed under the European Birds Directive and Habitats Directive.

Among the many species which are dependent on the habitat are birds like the Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark, and insects like the silver-studded blue butterfly and heath tiger beetle.

The Duddle Heath site

A partnership project is restoring heathland in an area made famous by the writer Thomas Hardy.

Duddle Heath, near Dorchester, is Hardy's birthplace and was mentioned in his novel *The Return of the Native*. The "Rainbarrows" referred to in the book can still be seen on the site today.

The 21 ha heath, on the edge of Puddletown Forest, is one of 75 sites across 7000 hectares of Dorset heathland benefiting from English Nature's Hardy's Egdon Heath (HEH) project. It is part of the Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage programme, paid for by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The partners, English Nature, Simon Pomeroy, a private landowner, Dorset County Council, owner of the neighbouring Black Heath, and the Forestry Commission, which owns the adjacent forest, have been working to return the area to its historic heathland state.

Restoration has focused on the removal of pine and birch to create

conditions suitable for heathers. Dorset County Council has used "litter-scraping" machinery to take built-up humus down to the mineral layer, allowing heath plants to re-colonise, and rampant rhododendron has had to be cut or dug away.

As well as its literary links, the site has a number of Scheduled Monuments including the Rainbarrows, which are Bronze Age burial mounds, and a Roman road hailed by English Heritage as one of the best examples of its kind in south west England. The partners have worked with English Heritage to ensure scrub clearance has not damaged these structures, and instead, has had a positive effect by removing trees from the monuments.

HEH Project Manager, Richard Elston, said, "With the combination of the Thomas Hardy history, the Roman road and the thrill of seeing the land revert back to heath, this has been a very satisfying project.

"In Dorset, heathland is our most important habitat because of its rarity and the species it supports. We will be able to measure our success through the wildlife we find. We hope the rare smooth snake, which is native here, and other reptile species, will thrive and create new territories. Six pairs of nightjar were recorded breeding here in 2004 and we hope the habitat works will significantly improve conditions for this bird."

The next stage is a maintenance programme including follow-up spraying of scrub regrowth, bracken control, and a grazing regime combining Duddle Heath and Black Heath as one 28 ha unit. The partners will carry out ongoing biological surveys, so management can be refined whenever necessary.

Landowner Simon Pomeroy said, "I am passionate about the scenic aspects, the fine views in all directions, and about improving the chances of survival for the rare flora and fauna on the site. There are immense advantages in partnership working as we can pool our resources and skills to protect and conserve all these important elements."

A LIFE-line for urban heaths

Heathland is by no means an exclusively "countryside" feature. These areas are an essential part of our urban environment, often providing much-needed green space.

Almost a third of Dorset's internationally important heathland is in the built-up south-east of the county, with nearly half a million people living nearby.

Because they are used for recreation, these urban heaths face their own particular pressures, such as arson, erosion of vegetation and sandy soil, crushing of rare plants by humans, horses, mountain bikes or illegal off-roading, disturbance to rare breeding birds, enrichment of the soil by dog dirt and dumped rubbish, and wildlife being preyed on by domestic pets.

In Dorset a partnership has been formed, supported by £1.2 million

funding from the European Union's LIFE-Nature Fund and led by Dorset County Council. The project unites local councils, English Nature, Dorset Wildlife Trust, The Herpetological Conservation Trust, (a charity dedicated to the protection of amphibians and reptiles,) Dorset Police and Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, to care for 1,900 ha of heathland in and around the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation.

Project Manager Heather Tidball said, "In tackling the range of pressures, we do not want to create preserved nature sanctuaries where human activity is banned. These urban heaths are often the only

nearby green spaces left for people to visit. The problem is that some people just don't realise how their actions affect these fragile and threatened habitats."

Dorset's Urban Heaths LIFE Project has provided extra wardens, a police Heathland and Wildlife Protection Officer and new equipment for the Fire and Rescue Service. And, perhaps most importantly, the partners have been able to raise awareness, through an education drive in the community and local schools, to help people understand why these precious habitats should be protected for future generations, and how this can be achieved.

Pulling together

The Thames Basin Heaths have Special Protection Area (SPA) status, due to their internationally important population of three rare birds: woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.

As pressure for housing increases, there are growing concerns that these birds will be vulnerable to disturbance from the associated recreational use of the heaths.

In partnership with regional and local bodies, English Nature's Thames and Chilterns team has come up with a plan to protect the SPA from serious damage, while enabling local authorities to streamline the planning process for residential developments and provide adequate greenspace for an expanding local population.

The Thames Basin Delivery Plan will promote a more joined-up approach to housing across the area's 11 planning authorities, introducing measures to conserve heathland bird populations where there is new development.

Thames and Chilterns Team Manager, Rob Cameron, said, "The heathlands are valued by local communities for the opportunities they give for peaceful recreation, and we want to enable this to continue. We are happy to advise landowners on ways of managing

Peter Wakely/English Nature



Urban heaths are valued by local communities

public access to ensure these sites stay special for wildlife and aren't damaged by disturbance."

The guidance is summarised in a new leaflet *Thames Basin Heaths – Pulling together for access, conservation and development* which is available from the team on 01635 268881 or on the Thames and Chilterns page of www.english-nature.org.uk



The bird hide

Fradley Pool Nature Reserve

English Nature sponsored the Natural Environment category in this year's Waterways Renaissance Awards held to recognise projects which improve and enhance the UK's rivers and canals.

A glittering occasion

- The awards were announced during a prestigious ceremony at Madame Tussauds in London, on March 16.
- The event was hosted by TV presenter John Craven, Vice-President of The Waterways Trust, and guest speaker was Waterways Minister Alun Michael.
- Two hundred people from across Britain attended, and awards were presented in eight categories.

Award points

- The annual Waterways Renaissance awards are run by The Waterways Trust and the British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) to recognise best practice in waterway regeneration across the UK.
- Nominations are from public, private, community and voluntary organisations.
- A panel chaired by The Waterways Trust Chief Executive Roger Hanbury, judged the entries.
- This year, English Nature donated funding of £5,000.

Wetland winner in waterways oscars

The winner was Fradley Pool Nature Reserve, a 3.5 ha wetland reserve built around a disused reservoir near Burton-upon-Trent.

It lies on the junction of the Trent and Mersey/Coventry canals, historically an industrial area in the heart of the West Midlands.

The restoration project was led by British Waterways and designed to draw in a cross-section of partners including schools, Lichfield District Council, the Wildlife Trust, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the contractors, AWG Construction Services. The work cost £214,000 and funding came from the British Waterways Make a Difference fund.

The project centrepiece is a bird hide, which has a light airy modern design but was built using traditional crafts and materials, such as Norfolk reed thatching, and timbers from the site.

A new circular walk around the reservoir is accessible to less able visitors. The materials used were carefully chosen. The "timber" of the boardwalk is actually recycled plastic, which is rot-resistant, non-slip and recyclable. The path is recycled aggregate and there are two aquatic and birdlife sculptures carved from living sycamores.

The marsh areas and woodland have been improved. Selective felling, thinning, coppicing and pollarding have created more diverse habitats and opened up tree canopies to attract birds like long-tailed tits, bullfinches, kingfishers and woodpeckers. Floating reed islands have been created as a peaceful nesting area for wetland birds.

Project Manager Leela O'Dea, of British Waterways, said, "It is an amazing site with so many different habitats. We have reedbeds and willow carr and semi-natural woodland beyond the reservoir. You can sense and smell how the woodland changes from hazel and holly on one side to species like wych elm on the other.

"An important aspect of this project is that it was something the community wanted. The area around the village is getting more and more built up and Fradley Pool gives people access to a green area where they can relax and enjoy nature."

Improved mooring, a new cafe and shop have attracted more visitors.

The Natural Environment award goes to a project which demonstrates excellence in improving, interpreting or restoring the natural environment of inland waterways and enhances waterway use. The judging panel felt Fradley Pool did just that.

The panel Chair, Roger Hanbury, said, "The project attracts visitors to Fradley Junction in the first instance, then introduces them more widely to the waterway network. Passing boaters can moor up and stretch their legs, encouraging greater environmental awareness and knowledge.

"The scheme has successfully restored and enhanced the natural environment, achieving a balance between preservation and promotion. It is a terrific example of the difference that can be made to the UK's waterways, given energy, commitment and vision."