



The show must go on

A roundup of this year's summer shows

Walk on the wild side

Conservationists enjoy a walk on an award-winning farm

Woodland restoration

Ancient Foxley Wood is designated a National Nature Reserve

Red Alert

Managing woodland to help red squirrels

English Nature is the statutory body which 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, representative bodies, agencies and voluntary organisations.

English Nature Magazine is published six times a year to promote nature conservation in England and make people aware of the latest developments. The views expressed in it by individuals are not necessarily those of English Nature.

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We operate a number of other offices across the country, from where our staff deal with local nature conservation issues.

Details of your nearest office can be obtained by phoning Northminster House, or by requesting a copy of English Nature Facts and Figures Information guide, free from the Enquiry Service at Northminster House, Tel 01733 455100.

You can also learn more about us via the Internet. Our address is:
www.english-nature.org.uk



Awarded for excellence

Cover picture



Cover photograph: Paul Keene / FRPS Avico Ltd.

A youngster checks out invertebrates in the pond made by English Nature for this year's BBC Gardeners' World Live Show. See the full article starting on page 10

English Nature magazine can now be read on the English Nature website at:
www.english-nature.org.uk/magazine

brief update

Lundy Island set for No Take Zone



Paul Glendell / English Nature

England's only statutory Marine Nature Reserve (MNR) - Lundy Island

Long-term benefits of the No Take Zone:

- Increase in fish and shellfish within and outside the closed area;
- The zone will act as a refuge for fish and shellfish;
- Greater catches of fish for fishermen around the edges of the closed area;
- Increase in the wealth of marine life;
- Increased benefits to local economies from tourism, diving, research and providing a long-term viable area for fishing.

England's first official 'No Take Zone' (NTZ) could soon be launched at Lundy Island, Devon - the country's only statutory Marine Nature Reserve (MNR).

3.3km² of sea on the east side of the reserve was proposed a NTZ by English Nature and Devon Sea Fisheries Committee (DSFC) in July this year. This means no living natural resources, including lobsters, crabs and fish, could be taken from this area.

The initiative follows a non-statutory NTZ launched in Cornwall in 1997, and has been supported by local

fishermen and Lundy Management and Advisory Groups.

English Nature's Maritime Conservation Officer for Lundy, Chris Davis, said, "This is good news all round. The marine life around Lundy Island is internationally important as well as being a valuable asset for local fishermen. The NTZ aims to ensure that our rich marine biodiversity is given full protection as well as providing some investment for the local fishermen in the future."

English Nature's Chair, Sir Martin Doughty, added,

"Within the next five years we would like to see more significant and larger NTZs set up around the coast to help towards the recovery of our important and special marine environment."

The bylaw has been submitted by Devon Sea Fisheries Committee (DSFC) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for a formal consultation period prior to confirmation by DEFRA.

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If this copy of English Nature magazine is not your own, and you would like to go on our mailing list to receive the magazine regularly, please contact Alison Eley, IMT, English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA.

Or you can e-mail your details to alison.eley@english-nature.org.uk

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, Gordon Leel, at English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, or at gordon.leel@english-nature.org.uk

SSSI success for English Nature

Protection for wildlife at Bramshill in Hampshire has been secured in a court victory for English Nature's Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) process.

The site owners had challenged the SSSI designation of Bramshill, a key part of the Thames Basin Heaths proposed Special Protection Area (SPA), on the grounds of the process of confirmation. A judicial review ruled that the process had been properly carried out by English Nature and did satisfy the requirement of human rights legislation to provide a fair and public hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal.

Bramshill has been identified as being internationally important for three species of heathland bird - woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler - that need protection and careful habitat management to ensure

their survival. English Nature plans to work with landowners and site managers so that woodland and heathland management provides the right spaces for these rare birds to flourish, safeguarding their populations in the south east of England.

"We are very pleased with this outcome on two counts," said English Nature's Acting Chief Executive, Andy Brown. "First, we can now ensure that the wildlife of Bramshill SSSI is conserved and will contribute to a future for some of our rarest native birds. Secondly, this case has ensured that English Nature's site designation processes have been thoroughly scrutinised by the judiciary, and we have been shown to be exercising our duties properly and responsibly, to deliver a valued nature conservation service on behalf of the public."

And the winner is...



Chris Payne / Tarmac Southern Ltd.

Greenham Common, Berkshire, was a runner up in the category of Nature Conservation at this year's Quarry Showcase Restoration Awards. The former US Nuclear Air Base has been transformed into a haven for local species, such as the Dartford warbler and woodlark, by West Berkshire County Council and English Nature, with Tarmac Southern in charge of operational partnerships. (From left) Heather Whetter, English Nature Conservation Officer, Stuart Goldthorpe, Tarmac Southern Restoration Manager, George Alagiah, BBC1 news presenter, Jeff Kew, RSPB Project Development Manager, Sue Marsh, Senior Planning Officer for West Berkshire Council, Andy Cadell, Estates Surveyor for Tarmac Southern and Ed Cooper, from Greenham Enterprise HUB.

NEWS IN SHORT

War declared on invasive plants

English Nature welcomes a decision by the Royal Horticultural Society not to allow exhibitors to sell invasive plants at any of its shows or events.

The new policy, which will come into effect next year, is a step forward in protecting wildlife, particularly native aquatic plants, which are increasingly under pressure from invasives like water fern, parrot's feather, floating pennywort and Australian swamp stonecrop.

English Nature Freshwater Ecologist, Stewart Clarke, said, "The decision is sending the right message out to people as it is raising awareness of how destructive these plants can be. Very often people inadvertently buy them simply because they are available; this decision is an important step towards tackling the source of many invasive weed problems."

Changes to lead shot legislation

Legislation introduced in 1999 to restrict the use of lead shot has been changed to ensure it is effective and relevant.

The revised legislation states that lead shot must not be used when shooting on the foreshore in England, on over 200 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which are important for waterfowl, and cannot be used to shoot ducks, geese, swans, coot and moorhen.

The Lead Shot Review Group, which includes English Nature, submitted a report to the Government, and the revisions to the legislation are based on its recommendations. The group will be monitoring compliance of the amended legislation.

For more information about the report, log on to www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/rrrpac/shot/index.htm

NEWS IN SHORT

CAP reform unveiled

'A bold and essential move forward' was the word from English Nature when the European Commission's proposals for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) were recently unveiled after its mid-term review.

English Nature's Senior Agricultural spokesman, Alastair Rutherford said, "There is obviously a strong intention to break the link between the subsidies to farmers and food production which has had a long-term and damaging impact on the environment. The redirection of existing support into rural development and incentives for managing the environment has been long awaited."

Commons change urged

English Nature is urging the Government to allocate sufficient time in Parliament to resolve problems surrounding common land legislation. The move comes after English Nature welcomed proposed changes outlined in the Government's Common Land Policy Statement 2002, published earlier this year.

180,000 ha of England's common land have been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, but many of the commons are losing their wildlife because current management is either not environmentally sustainable or is absent, with over 60 per cent of the area in unfavourable condition.

New NNR

A former prisoner of war camp on the Lincolnshire coast has been designated a National Nature Reserve (NNR) – making it the first NNR to be owned by the Ministry of Defence.

Donna Nook is used as an RAF weapons range and has a section used for active bombing. It has been recognised by English Nature as an important area for wildlife, and was praised for its high quality of management work.

Sustainability fund

English Nature has been selected by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to award grants totalling around £9 million over two years through the new Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

The fund has arisen from the tax levied on the sale of sand, gravel and crushed rock from April 2002.

In response to the DEFRA announcement, English Nature is now inviting applications for projects that aim to conserve and enhance the geological and geomorphological features in areas affected by aggregate extraction and conserve and enhance biodiversity in areas affected by aggregate extraction.

The scheme will also look to improve access for scientific research, education, recreation and tourism.

English Nature is currently seeking applications for projects that can be completed by March 2004. For an application form and further information, contact the Sustainability Fund Grants Team on 01476 584821.

Let's work together



All smiles – English Nature's Chair, Sir Martin Doughty, (left) and Chairman of the Moorland Association, Simon Bostock, signed a memorandum of understanding on 25 June 2002, which gives recognition to the part played by grouse moor owners in maintaining habitats in the uplands of England. It forms the basis for closer working between English Nature and The Moorland Association to enhance the conservation value of moorland, whilst retaining the sporting interest of grouse moors.

Ancient grassland becomes SSSI

Nestled alongside the busy A303, Long Lye Meadow is as prime an example of ancient Somerset grassland as you could hope to find. It also supports the rare crested dog's tail and, as such, has just been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest by English Nature.

The plant is normally found in traditionally managed haymeadows, but is becoming a threatened species – over the last century 97 per cent of its habitat has been destroyed and now only 6,000 hectares remain in England.

The 3.25 hectare site, managed by Chard farmer Mr Hodges, will now have stronger protection against any future planning and management changes. "We cut the hay after the main flowering period in July and August," said Mr Hodges. "This gives the beautiful array of wild flowers such as green-winged orchids, corky-fruited water-dropwort, and devil's-bit scabious the best possible conditions to grow."

The site's ecological importance was only realised thanks to a public enquiry investigating the

upgrading of the A303 to a dual carriageway in 1995. However, the proposal has now been revived and Gwilym Wren, English Nature's transport spokesperson for the South West, said, "We are closely involved in the South West Area Multi-Modal Study (SWARMMS) and work to ensure that unique sites like Long Lye Meadows are protected from both direct and indirect impacts. Our aim is to promote nature conservation and encourage developers to examine all the available options so that sustainable solutions can be found."

Planning reforms

The Government's planning reforms appear to have put a commitment to sustainable development back on track. Just how far should become apparent once plans to expand housing provision and airport capacity become a reality.

Announced by the Deputy Prime Minister on 18 July, the reforms offer the opportunity to enhance the environment in which we live and work, and to protect valuable wildlife. Thanks in part to English Nature's representations during consultation, concerns over the direction of the original Green Paper have been eased.

"We particularly welcome the aim of a clear purpose for the planning system to deliver sustainable development," says Senior Planning Adviser Jonathan Price, "and the new regional and local frameworks will hopefully cement this."

"Statements of national policy should provide a clear context for planning major infrastructure, which we hope will guide decisions that safeguard the environment."

Yet the reforms coincide with news of major developments planned for the South East. The £1.1 billion increase in housing and further expansion of airport capacity will add weight to the significant pressure already being applied to the region's natural heritage.

In response, English Nature's Chair, Sir Martin Doughty, has called for a stronger commitment to development in the South East that protects and enhances the environment and local communities. Higher density, sustainably designed housing, he says, should be built that offers places people want to live in without the removal of high quality natural green space.

David Markham, English Nature's Transport and Recreation Adviser, adds, "An efficient air traffic system is also important for the economy and people, yet needs to be carefully planned for the future to ensure any environmental impacts are minimised. But before the Government considers new capacity, we must ensure that best use is made of existing airport capacity and that measures are introduced to internalise the true environmental costs of air travel."

A number of different sites are now under consideration, some of which will have significant environmental costs.

"The next step is to advise the Department for Transport and engage with other bodies to ensure that each option is carefully assessed and that undesirable impacts are reduced," continues David.

Clearly the key to any successful outcome is integration at all levels.

"In terms of housing and transport, we're calling for much more integration, a more visionary type of planning that incorporates development, agriculture, forestry, wildlife, water, etc.," says Wanda Fojt, English Nature's Regional Policy Adviser for the South East. "It's about being able to see shared benefits whether environmental, social or economic. This joined-up approach would have multi-benefits, as Government realises, and we're able to at least stand a better chance of realising our vision."

CONFERENCE TIME

October 2002

English Nature and the British Association of Nature Conservationists (BANC) will hold a conference on 30 and 31 October at the Bosworth Hall Hotel, near Leicester, to examine the relationship between nature conservation and health, social exclusion, housing and other sectors of society. The event will be chaired by former Government Chief Scientist, Sir Martin Holdgate, and will involve speakers, including English Nature's Chair and Chief Executive. Cost for public and private sector delegates is £150. Other delegates, including those from non-Government organisations, pay £90. Contact Steve Berry on 01273 487743 or email him at steve.berry@english-nature.org.uk

November 2002

English Nature, in conjunction with the Environment Agency and DEFRA, will host a one-day seminar on 'LIFE-Nature and the future of EU funding for nature conservation' on 28 November at One Great George Street, London. The aim of the event is to raise awareness of LIFE-Nature, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and generate a discussion on the future of EU funding for nature conservation. Anyone with an interest in nature conservation is welcome. For further information, contact Christina Philp on 01733 455401, or email her at christina.philp@english-nature.org.uk.

February 2003

The 11th Species Recovery Programme (SRP) Conference will be held as a one-day event in February next year at London Zoo, courtesy of the Zoological Society of London which has played a major part in the programme since its launch. The theme will be 'Progress through Partnership', speakers will be drawn from English Nature's major partners. To register your interest, call Angie Brewell on 01733 455271 or email her at angie.brewell@english-nature.org.uk. The date of the conference has yet to be confirmed.

April 2003

The first conference on mineral collecting will be held on 16 April 2003. The 'Mineral Collecting and Conservation – Hammering out a Future' event will be held at the University of Salford and has been organised by English Nature, the Geological Society's Geo-conservation Committee and the Russell Society. Hannah Townley, English Nature's Igneous Geologist, said, "The event is being held in a bid to help collectors, landowners and conservationists discuss their views on collecting minerals so we can find a way to establish better partnership in the future. There will be various speakers and an open debate on the day and then I will produce a report which will be available to the public." For more information, contact Hannah on 01733 455304, or email her at hannah.townley@english-nature.org.uk

A walk on a winning farm

Why would conservation advisors, wildlife experts, DEFRA officials, farmers, vets and others gather for a walk around an Oxfordshire farm? To see how farmers like David Passmore, winner of this year's NFU Biodiversity Award, can farm profitably while encouraging wildlife. Amanda Giles, one of English Nature's Editors, reported on the experience.

Mays Farm is a modern, profitable, mixed farm growing arable crops such as winter wheat and barley, with undersown leys left fallow during the winter. David runs 200 ewes and has a beef herd with most of the meat sold direct to the consumer. His land harbours scarce farmland birds including skylarks, corn buntings, grey partridges, visiting turtle doves, wheatears, and rare arable weeds such as corn spurrey and prickly poppy.

Looking from the top of the escarpment, this is the sort of farmed landscape we all love. Some fields are grazed, others are cropped and none are vast. Hedges and fence lines add diversity and turn the picture into a

David encourages wildlife and saves money by managing the whole farm on a mixed rotation. David's vet, Eddy Friend, told us how mixed farming systems make ecological and economic sense in England because our temperate climate is well suited to growing grass and making meat. The natural balance created under mixed farming systems means they rely less on chemical inputs than more intensive systems and are more sustainable. This keeps David's unit costs of production low. With world prices at an all-time low, the need for sustainable agriculture is more acute than ever. Trying to maximise yields can no longer

Courtesy of NFU



farmer and one of David's neighbours, showed us the diversity of habitats on Mays Farm. He also spoke of his concern that

conservation on farms today is too often only "fiddling about at the edges" and that within these margins is a squeaky clean crop, empty of wildlife.

Agri-environment grants, paid to farmers for environmental work, are criticised by farmers like David and Stephen because, not only do they restrict themselves to the hedges, edges and other non-cropped parts of the farm, they do not reward farmers for the wildlife rich areas of the farm they are already managing.

Alastair Rutherford, English Nature's Senior Agriculture Policy Officer, explained that English Nature is working on the development of a new agri-environment scheme. This would be widely available in order to get much larger numbers of land managers involved and encourage good environmental practice across a much wider area of the countryside. Such a "broad and shallow" approach will help redress the loss of wildlife like the brown hare, skylark and cornflower, keep our freshwater clean and the landscape

Enjoying a walk on an award winning farm (L-R) David Passmore, vet Eddy Friend and local farmer Stephen Hart



Courtesy of NFU

hand. "At the end of the day, the farming has to come first – it has to be profitable", says David, "but I think more and more now about how I can encourage the farm's bird population within my existing farming system".

David is using his prize money to participate in a farm study with the Game Conservancy Trust, which compares the difference in biodiversity between traditional mixed and conventional arable farms. The study will be used to identify what kinds of farming systems help wildlife.

The Biodiversity Award has been renamed the English Nature Farming for Wildlife Award 2003 and is part of the NFU Farming Excellence awards. Closing dated for applications is 15 November. Contact NFU CallFirst on 0870 8400638 for details.

beautiful. The scheme would provide payment for farmers who look after the existing more natural areas on the farm as well as those who want to improve the wildlife value of their farms, including the cropped and grazed areas. In return for this more positive approach to countryside management, the farmers would receive a fixed payment per

hectare, which reflects the costs of management involved.

Farming today needs to mix the best of the old with the best of the new. Mays Farm shows clearly how mixed farming and careful rotations are sensible, sustainable systems where farming and conservation go hand in

Now is the time for... winter birds



Peter Wakeley / English Nature

Next in our expert series, Senior Ornithologist for English Nature, Allan Drewitt, fills us in on migrating birds which are just around the corner...

"Autumn is an exciting time for birdwatchers, as the shorter days and falling leaves presage a great change in the country's bird life. In September and October the summer migrants head south to their wintering grounds in Africa. This mass migration generally goes unnoticed as many birds leave at night, perhaps the most obvious sign of movement for many people is the gathering of large numbers of swallows and house martins on overhead wires as they prepare for their long journey.

This generally understated departure is in great contrast to the arrival of the wintering migrants, the swans, geese, ducks and waders that depart their northern breeding grounds in search of milder conditions further south. It is difficult to overstate the importance of Britain for the millions of wintering waterfowl that arrive here every year. One of the most dramatic examples of this mass migration is the spectacle of tens of thousands of pink-footed geese arriving over the coastal marshes of north

Norfolk and Lancashire as they retreat from the snow and ice of their breeding grounds in Greenland and Iceland. No less spectacular are the enormous numbers of waders such as knot, dunlin and bar-tailed godwit that congregate on our coasts, with hundreds of thousands of birds feeding on the larger estuaries such as the Wash, Humber and Ribble.

Autumn does not see the arrival of waterbirds alone. Britain is also an important wintering area for those colourful Scandinavian thrushes, the redwing and the fieldfare, with at least one million of each arriving every winter to feed in our hedgerows and fields. These charismatic birds often form large flocks, and their distinctive calls, as they fly overhead, are highly evocative of the oncoming winter. With so many birds arriving throughout the country, from the coasts to inland farmland, it is perhaps not surprising that many birdwatchers look forward to autumn and winter, rather than regretting the passing of summer."



At one with nature – David Passmore

Courtesy of NFU

Flourishing into the future

Foxley Wood

Hidden treasures in woodlands are the stuff of fairy tales, but it has been an all too real story at Foxley Wood. Restoring an ancient wood submerged beneath heavy coniferisation has been the work of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust for the past decade, and their success has earned the site National Nature Reserve (NNR) status.



Norfolk Wildlife Trust

The coppice at Foxley Wood is mainly hazel and ash with field maple, sallow and small-leaved lime. Woodland plants such as St John's wort, stitchwort and bugle also thrive, flowers include bluebell, early purple orchid, herb Paris and lily of the valley. Insects include ringlet, meadow brown and comma butterflies, bee hawk moths and crickets.

Foxley Wood NNR has been managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust since 1989, and is currently funded by English Nature through the Reserves Enhancement Scheme and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Trust's biggest challenge has been to remove conifers and encourage native species to return, but they are also working to make the site more accessible to visitors and more self-sustainable through the sale of woodland products.

"Foxley Wood is Norfolk's largest and best ancient wood," explained Andy Millar, conservation officer with English Nature's Norfolk Team. "It is a magical place – you can walk from one end to the other and see several different types of woodland. When you go through the wood you get this sense of the changing seasons, and of timelessness, it is always a memorable experience."

Ancient history

The ancient woodland at Foxley, so nearly consigned to history through the coniferisation programme, is believed to be around 6,000 years old. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and trees have grown on the site since the last Ice Age.

Domesday Book states that Foxley had 'pannage rights for 300 hogs' – around 120 hectares, the size of the present day wood.

The earliest reference to Foxley's woodland industry is from a 1391 source (quoted in a 19th century book, Norfolk Parks by Reverend Farrar) stating that the Keeper, J. Low, was allowed to enclose areas of coppice to protect young trees from the King's deer.

In the 1880s, local naturalist, Reverend Norgate, documented the wildlife and activities at the wood. For instance on 3 May 1881, he wrote, 'Oak felling and bark peeling begins in Foxley Wood'. Bark peeling was essential to the tanning industry, and also a major industry for the wood.

From the mid-19th century until the 1950s, Foxley was managed primarily for game, though coppicing still continued.

The 126 hectare wood was designated an NNR by English Nature in May, as a recognition of the high level of management undertaken at the site.

"In the late 1960s the wood underwent a period of coniferisation, and much of our work has been restoring the deciduous woodland," said John

Robin Chittenden / English Nature

"When you go through the wood you get this sense of the changing seasons, and of timelessness, it is always a memorable experience."

Milton, Woodland Officer with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

"When coniferisation took place the existing woodland was aerial sprayed with herbicide when the trees were in full leaf, protecting the ground flora, which means these areas are species rich."

The initial phase of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's work, clearing the conifers, is now in its final stages. Along with this re-coppicing the wood, cutting trees close to ground level to encourage new shoots, has been a key part of the work.

At one time the whole of Foxley Wood was coppiced, and the Trust is aiming to re-coppice around a third, spread across different soil types for maximum diversity. They are also working to improve the derelict woodland, and create open spaces.

"We are planning to fence in the large central glade in Foxley Wood, to reintroduce grazing by the Trust's sheep flock," John added. "Close by this area is an almost unique plateau alder wood, created as the soil retains water over the winter. We intend to block up old ditching and drainage to encourage water retention there."

Enhancing the visitor experience at Foxley Wood has also been an important part of the Trust's work. A new visitor facility will be opened next year to include a new car park. A nature trail has been laid out and new interpretation boards that can be updated seasonally have been put up.

Robin Chittenden / English Nature



Melinda Appleby, English Nature council member, hands over the NNR declaration to Don Dorlin, Chairman of Norfolk Wildlife Trust

"Particularly on a site like Foxley, where there is a lot going on, it is good to be able to update and inform people," John said. "Foxley has changed so dramatically over the last 12 years, partly because of the large amount of active management work going on, and we want people to understand why."

In trying to make the wood as sustainable as possible, the Trust is looking at finding markets for a number of products such as hurdles, woodchip mulch and timber for charcoal.

"There are a lot of exciting projects coming up," John added, "and being designated with NNR status has been a great boost. It is a credit to Norfolk Wildlife Trust's work at Foxley Wood, and lets people know that this is a site for people to come to and see how ancient woodland should be managed."



Foot and Mouth caused the cancellation or slimlining of many summer shows up and down the country last year, but this didn't stop organisers from co-ordinating some of the most grand and popular events ever this year. The summer months saw English Nature getting involved with both national and local shows, from the BBC Gardeners' World Live Show to the Penrith Show. Here is a roundup of some of those events...

The show must go on



Paul Keene / FRPS Avico Ltd.

What BBC Gardeners' World Live Show
When 19 to 23 June
Where National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

①

English Nature scooped three awards during its second visit to BBC Gardeners' World – the organisation won top prize for Best Interactive Stand and was highly commended in the Best Education and Best Contribution to Environmental and Conservation Issues categories. This year's stand had an aquatic feel to it, featuring an authentic garden pond and frog expert 'Dr Spawn' was on hand to give advice. Dr Spawn was a pseudonym, of course, and was in fact different members of English Nature taking it in turns to wear a giant frog outfit! One of those lucky few was Events Officer Catherine Prasad, who also received the awards from TV gardener Alan Titchmarsh. She said, "So many people had requested information about ponds at last year's event that

we decided to feature a real wildlife pond on the stand this year, full of great plants which attract wildlife into gardens. The event was an outstanding success, beyond our wildest dreams really."

15 National Nature Reserves (NNRs), particularly renowned for various types of birds, were highlighted by English Nature at this bird event of the year. Ornithologists from across the country took part in the fair and were given an update on the progress of hen harriers and the long-awaited return of the Cornish chough. Visitors to the stand also had the chance to see highlights of red kite footage filmed last year in Rockingham Forest.

What British Birdwatching Fair
When 16 to 18 August
Where Rutland Water

③



Paul Keene / FRPS Avico Ltd.

What Royal Show
When 1 to 4 July
Where Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

②

Featuring displays on conservation as a farming business, the main English Nature stand was located right at the heart of the show. Another English Nature stand in the farming and



Paul Keene / FRPS Avico Ltd.

environment area had on display different types of machinery, used to manage land in a wildlife-friendly way. The English Nature sponsored NFU Biodiversity Award was re-launched as the Farming for Wildlife Award and at a special lunch Sir Donald Curry and English Nature Chair, Sir Martin

Doughty, presented 14 Sites of Special Scientific Interest Award winners with their certificates. The Wiltshire Team also celebrated after one of its Stoke

herd of Pedigree Longhorn, Stoke Unicorn, won First Senior Bull and was chosen as male champion Longhorn.



Paul Keene / FRPS Avico Ltd.

LOCAL ROUND-UP

What Royal Bath and West Show
When 29 May to 1 June
Where Shepton Mallet, Somerset
Who Somerset and Gloucestershire Team

①

English Nature attended this annual agricultural show for the first time in at least ten years. With a stand situated near the cattle rings, this year's show proved to be a great success. For the first time English Nature



Paul Glendell / English Nature

sponsored a show class for cattle and Dr Andy Brown, English Nature's Acting Chief Executive, presented prizes for the best Red Devon male and female cattle. English Nature's Deputy Area Manager,

Gwilym Wren, said, "Despite bad weather over the first two days, Saturday saw record visitors. We had the standard English Nature stand with interactive features which proved a big hit with visitors. We had regular visits from farmers, which is important as we rely on good relations and contacts with the farming community to keep SSSIs in favourable condition. We are seriously thinking about attending next year's show and would like to get other teams involved."

What East of England Show
When 14 to 16 June
Where East of England Showground, Peterborough
Who Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Team

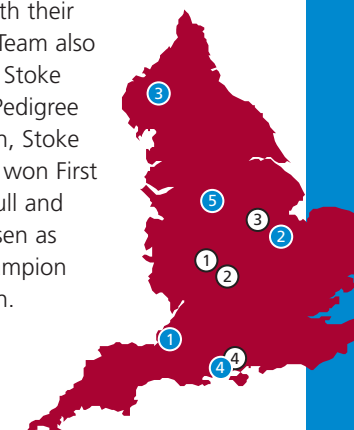
②

English Nature was one of 300 organisations at this annual agricultural and countryside show. Literature, including this year's annual report, was available for visitors, and the corporate and junior display boards were also on show. Other attractions at the show included cattle judging, show jumping, and clothes and gardening stalls.

What Penrith Show
When 27 July
Where Brougham Hall Farm, Penrith
Who Cumbria Team

③

Traditional wrestling, show jumping, livestock and farm machinery were just a few of the attractions at this busy show, which was cancelled last year because of Foot and Mouth. English Nature staff erected a marquee, containing a special display on the uplands and peat bogs, and entertained children (and their parents!) by encouraging them to use their artistic talents to do brass rubbings, make badges and paint owl, kingfisher and frog masks. Over 750 children visited the stand and the best artists received a goody bag. English Nature also held two free draws, one for adults and one for kids. The adult winner received a bottle of whisky and the junior winner was presented with a Woolworths voucher. Conservation Officer, Helen Johnston, said, "It was my first show so I didn't know what to expect, but our stand went down really well and a lot of people commented on how good it was. Hundreds of people took part in the competition and it definitely helped raise English Nature's profile."





What CLA Game Fair
When 26 to 28 July
Where Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire

④

Amidst soaring temperatures, Acting Chief Executive, Dr Andy Brown, hosted a reception at English Nature's stand for invited guests of the 46th annual CLA Game Fair on 26 July. English Nature joined hundreds of other exhibitors and the stand highlighted chalk rivers, hen harriers and farmland birds.

Paul Keene / FRPS Avico Ltd.

The show must go on

What New Forest & Hampshire County Show
When 30 July to 1 August
Where New Park, Brockenhurst, Hampshire
Who Hampshire and Isle of Wight Team

④

A few downpours didn't keep farmers, local people and tourists away from this annual agricultural event. English Nature held a stand which featured around wildlife-friendly gardening and kept children happy with a junior display, which included a very popular wormery. Jo Ramsay, Protected Species Officer for English Nature, said, "It was a good opportunity to speak to people face to face and help them with individual enquiries, we were also situated in a prominent position at the event, which I think encouraged visitors to come and speak to us."



English Nature

What Bakewell Show
When 7 to 8 August
Where Bakewell Showground, Bakewell
Who Peak District and Derbyshire Team

⑤

The warm weather held out over this historic two-day agricultural event, which has been running for 172 years. Thousands of visitors enjoyed attractions, including dog shows, livestock shows, show jumping and various stalls and stands. English Nature's stand this year had a theme of working with farmers to benefit wildlife and the Five Point Plan for wildlife-friendly farming. English Nature Chair, Sir Martin Doughty, also presented 11 local SSSI owners and occupiers with awards for their outstanding contribution and commitment to wildlife conservation. Winners were given walking sticks made by local craftsman, Tony Winfield, from wood taken from Lathkill Dale National Nature Reserve. Refreshments were also on offer, including wine from Derbyshire's only vineyard. Debbie Worland, Community and Publicity Officer for the team, said, "It was a successful show and our stands helped to bring owners and occupiers together and to share good practice. One of them even phoned me after the event to say "thank you" which was lovely and makes it all worthwhile."

"It's been a really successful year for attending shows, following the cancellation of many of them last year because of Foot and Mouth. This year we targeted specific shows to reach particular groups of people and as a result spoke to thousands of people across England about a whole host of subjects."

We will definitely be getting involved with a lot of events in the future; they are just a great way for us to meet members of the public face to face, and they give people the opportunity to find out more about the work of English Nature."

English Nature Events Officer,
Catherine Prasad

WHEN NATURE CALLS

The nights are starting to draw in and the restless month of September heralds the approach of autumn. In spite of protestations from TV weather forecasters, most of us will look back on a damp summer, punctuated by sharp storms which resulted in the Enquiry Service telephone going dead in the middle of conversations.

Summer brought a steady stream of snake enquiries and stag beetles seemed active. There were also a lot of hawk moth caterpillar sightings, often put down to being 'foreign creatures'.

I had two calls about water voles chewing through pond liners, making them expensive as well as unwelcome guests. The fuss about an alleged attack on a child by a fox resulted in a call from an expectant woman concerned that she had foxes in her garden.

Amongst the odder calls were queries on how to deter birds from messing in gardens and the sighting of a possible legless baby crocodile slithering across a driveway. A black panther had also been seen in a nearby wood. Whatever next?

Now is the season for the annual visit of your friendly house spider, not to mention mice clumping around lofts looking for a warm place to spend the winter. The birds are migrating and, on warm days, the grasshoppers and crickets come out for one last insect 'Prom' before the first frost.

A lovely month, in the words of local poet John Clare, "More sweet than summer in her loveliest house".

By Dick Seamons
English Nature's Enquiry Service

Running WildLink

An increasingly technological age means we all have a huge amount of information at our fingertips, and now the newly updated English Nature library services are more accessible than ever.

Since the new WildLink system was launched in May, it has transformed the library network. Not only can people now find out exactly what books, journals or reports are held in the Northminster House and Area Team libraries, they can do it from their own desk.

The library's previous system, STATUS, had been in place for 20 years and the update to WildLink means that users have increased access to records of printed information resources, and can also link directly to electronic documents on the internet.

"The old system used very technical language, and this system has been chosen because it is windows based and much more user-friendly," explained senior librarian, Isabel Chivers.

"Now we have the happy situation where people new to the organisation have no problems using this system, and established members of staff are rediscovering the resources that we hold."

Users will also have desktop access to circulation, acquisitions, inter-library loans and current awareness services. The plan for the future is to not only increase access to the library's own stock, but to further links with other organisations, such as the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency and Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

"We co-operate with partner organisations through inter-library



English Nature

Reference section

The English Nature library has existed since 1949 and is home to around 100,000 records.

Anyone who is a member of English Nature can use the library, and the facilities are also open for reference use by school groups and researchers by appointment.

The oldest book, held in the Flora Collection, was published in 1738 listing plants in Nottinghamshire.

There are 1,800 serial/journal titles on the WildLink system, 7,000 abstracts of journal articles, 58,600 books and reports.

In its first two months WildLink had 7,900 hits on the Library Homepage of the Intranet, with increasing numbers of people logging on all the time.

loans and exchanging publications, but hopefully in the future the service will allow members of these organisations, and eventually the public, to search across other libraries' databases, make requests and order materials on-line," Isabel said.

For more information on WildLink, contact Jean Tither on 01733 455092 or Anne Beach on 01733 455093

Surveying the scene

Over the last 30 years a number of our woodland birds have declined – some by over 80 per cent – an alarming trend that English Nature is determined to halt. Protecting them has seen specialists from 14 organisations join forces to launch a major new survey.

Under threat – bullfinches have declined by 40% over the last 30 years

The £600,000 Woodland Birds Survey, launched in June, will look at changes in woodland birds on 350 plots across England, Wales and part of Scotland. It is a four year project, and one which English Nature, along with the Forestry Commission and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), is a principal funding partner.

Numbers of woodland birds have been shown to decline by 20 per cent among

33 species over the past 25 years, with lesser spotted woodpecker and spotted flycatcher populations falling by over 80 per cent. It is a statistic that prompted the Forestry Commission, along with English Nature and others, to set up the Woodland Bird Group. RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) will be carrying out the survey for the group.

“Birds are seen as an indication of quality of life in the countryside – people like to see them and hear them singing,” said Phil Grice, English Nature’s Senior Ornithologist. “There is great concern that woodland birds are declining, and this project is the first step to finding out the factors important in their decline, to allow us to identify conservation steps we can take.”

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Phil Grice, English Nature’s Senior Ornithologist.

(far left) A spotted flycatcher and (left) with its young

Mike Hammett / English Nature



Mike Hammett / English Nature

There are three stages to the Woodland Birds Survey:

- 2002, Pilot Stage – methodologies are tested in preparation for the full survey;
- 2003-4, Full Survey – RSPB/BTO will revisit sites first surveyed in the 1970-80s to assess current numbers of woodland birds;
- 2005, Analysis, – determining changes in bird populations, evaluating how they relate to changes in habitat, woodland management, deer numbers, climate and other factors.

“As well as assessing where populations have declined and to what degree, the survey will look at the woodland itself and the changes which may have had an impact on the bird populations,” Phil said.

“For instance, we know there have been big changes in deer populations which have changed the structure of woods, dramatically reducing the understorey vegetation. The survey will look at the impact of these issues and also hopefully tie in with work already undertaken to find reasons for the

40 per cent decline in farmland birds.”

The results will look at trends regionally, by landscape context, woodland size and condition.

“There are around 15 different possible factors involved with the decline in woodland birds, and this survey will clarify what is happening in a regional context,” said Fred Currie,

Wildlife and Conservation Adviser for the Forestry Commission in England and Chairman of the Woodland Bird Group.

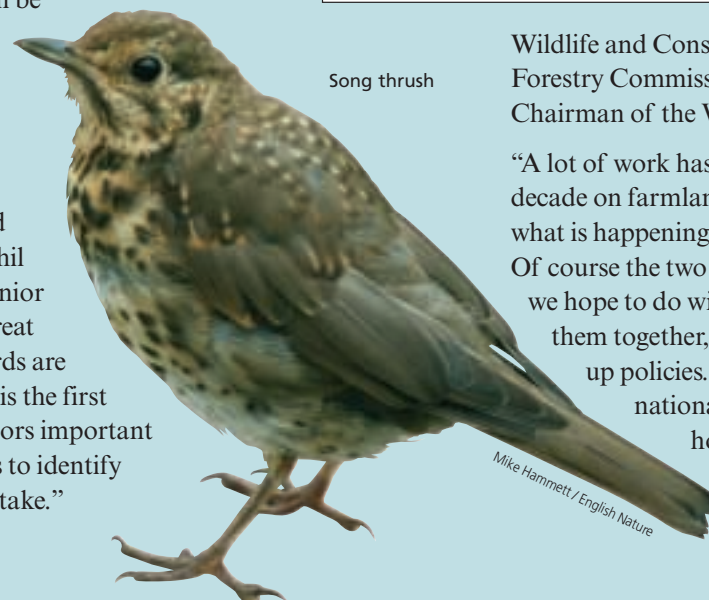
“A lot of work has been done in the last decade on farmland birds, almost forgetting what is happening to birds in our woodlands. Of course the two are interlinked, and what we hope to do with this survey is to consider them together, so we can develop joined up policies. The findings, both nationally and regionally, will hopefully tell us what the causes are, where, and what we can do to halt the declines.”

Decline and fall

Populations of some woodland bird species have shown a dramatic decline over the past 30 years, as highlighted in the English Common Birds Census, woodland plots, 1967-99 (source BTO).

Percentage decline	
song thrush	79%
marsh tit	68%
willow tit	77%
lesser spotted woodpecker	81%
spotted flycatcher	89%
bullfinch	40%

Song thrush



Mike Hammett / English Nature

WHAT'S ON? GUIDE

SEPTEMBER

SEP 18

FWAG AGM 2001/2002 West Yorkshire

The Goat Hill Farm, Briestfield, Dewsbury, at 7.30pm. Quiz and Sop Supper follow the AGM.

Contact: Mrs Trees Fewster, 01924 306552

SEP 21

Walking with trees

At Earnscombe Copse, Dorset. See the woodland by the light of the full moon, followed by a barbeque. 6.30pm. Free – donations to Tree Aid welcome.

Contact: Victor Cutchley, 01308 485332

SEP 22

Woodlands walk Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR

A walk through the pinewoods looking for signs of red squirrels. Booking essential. 10am - 12:30pm

Contact: Lynne Collins, 01704 578774

SEP 22

Beachwatch 2002

At Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. Annual beach litter survey along the beach at Crook Bank – bring an old pair of gloves. 2 - 4pm

Contact: Roger Briggs, 01507 338611

SEP 22

Circuit of Rostherne Mere NNR

A brisk 2hr walk followed by tea, coffee and biscuits at the bird observatory. 2pm - 4.30pm £2.00 per person

Contact: Tim Coleshaw, 01743 282014

OCTOBER

OCT 6

Fungus foray Dersingham Bog NNR

An introduction to the fascinating world of fungi. 2pm - 4pm

Contact: Ashley Murray, 01485 543044

OCT 16

Six Years into Stewardship

Talk at Listing Mill Farm, Gomersal. 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Contact: Mrs Trees Fewster, 01924 306552

OCT 20

Open day Broxbourne Wood NNR

An opportunity to find out more about woodlands. Bring lunch, sturdy boots and raincoat. 11am - 4pm

Contact: Paul Jarczewski, 01279 843067

OCT 31

Ghosts and lanterns Hatfield Forest NNR

Make a lantern and then go for a walk on the spookiest night of the year. Fancy dress compulsory – adults and children. 6pm - 7.30pm, Adults £3.00, children £2.00.

Contact: Jo Braddock, 01206 796666

NOVEMBER

NOV 6

Creatures of the mosses

Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR – slide show with Joan Daniels at Bettisfield Village Hall. 7.30pm - 9pm

Contact: Joan Daniels, 01948 880 362

NOV 9

Seal watch Teesmouth NNR

Two consecutive hour-long guided visits to British Energy's observation hide. Booking essential. 12pm and 1pm

Contact: Mike Leakey, 01429 853325

developing woodland management for red squirrels

The decline of red squirrels and spread of greys has been a wildlife issue in the UK for decades – one that projects such as Red Alert are working to tackle. At Finglandrigg Wood National Nature Reserve (NNR), an innovative event brought conservationists together to demonstrate how woodland could be managed to help red squirrels.



Geoffrey H. Lindop / English Nature

Visitors at Finglandrigg wood

English Nature hosted the Demonstration Day in June, which brought 21 woodland professionals, woodland owners and conservationists to the NNR in Cumbria. "The purpose was to share our experience in what we are attempting to do in encouraging red squirrels at Finglandrigg Wood," said Frank Mawby, Site Manager of English Nature's North Cumbria NNRS, who organised the event.

"Red squirrels have tended to be overlooked on the Solway plain because it is perceived that there are not many woodlands. In fact there are many young woodlands similar to Finglandrigg."

Finglandrigg Wood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for heathland, peatland, acid pasture, rush pasture and is a potential site for the marsh fritillary butterfly. The woodland

is only of secondary importance, and this has allowed a degree of flexibility in management, enabling ecologists to try different methods to conserve red squirrels and deter greys.

"Since reds eat the seeds in pine cones and greys eat acorns, the simplest strategy is to fell all the oaks and plant the woodland with pines," explained consultant woodland ecologist, Graeme Mactavish.

"But such a move is undesirable. For one thing, Finglandrigg hosts a population of purple hairstreak butterfly whose caterpillars eat oak leaves. One theoretical compromise was to pollard the oaks, which preserves a good show of leaves without producing a crop of acorns."

To test the theory ten oaks were pollarded, but the experiment was abandoned because the procedure proved time-consuming and expensive.



Paul Glendell / English Nature

Red squirrels' decline:

The current decline in red squirrel populations shows little sign of stopping. There are likely to be a number of reasons for the decline, including:

- the parapox virus (squirrel equivalent of myxomatosis) is currently in the red squirrel population but is resisted by greys;
- where they exist side by side, greys tend to out-compete reds;
- greys can eat unripe acorns, reds need pinecones ripe and therefore have a shorter feeding season; and
- political pressure on woodland tends to favour broadleaved trees and encourages the felling of coniferous woodland.

More successful has been the main thrust of the work, creating clearings and replanting with red squirrel food trees and thinning the birch and oak.

"Woodland management is a long-term venture, and we hope that we have developed a model applicable to many situations," Frank said.

"We have developed a red squirrel woodland management plan which aims to change the balance in the woodland, increasing pine and decreasing oaks, in a methodical way."

Copies of the management plan are available now on CD ROM. For more information, contact Frank Mawby on 01697 351517