



# Secrets of the ocean wanderers

## Working to safeguard marine turtles

### A true champion

Celebrating the achievements  
of the late David Arnold-Forster

### Save our shores

The Maritime State of Nature Report:  
preserving our marine environment

### Step back in time

Visiting the World Heritage Site on  
the Dorset and East Devon coastline

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.

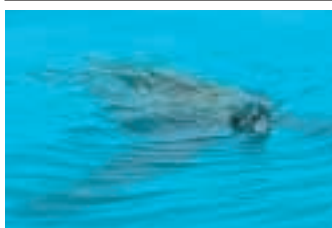
Details of your nearest office can be obtained by phoning Northminster House, or by requesting a copy of English Nature Facts and Figures Information guide, free from the Enquiry Service at Northminster House, Tel 01733 455100.

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Awarded for excellence

Cover picture



Cover photograph: Mike Daines

A leatherback turtle seen off the coast of Cornwall. With support from English Nature, work is now underway to learn more about these ocean wanderers.

See the full article starting on page 8



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

# brief update

## Staying alive

English Nature is keeping its fingers crossed that endangered hen harriers can sustain their dramatic comeback, after seven out of eleven nesting attempts to breed the birds have proved to be successful this year.

One successful nest was in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, where six chicks fledged, after co-ordinated monitoring by a team from the Hen Harrier Recovery Project, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the Upland Bird Study Group. This was the first successful breeding of hen harriers in the Dales for nine years, and was one of five separate locations in which hen harriers attempted to breed in 2002,

ranging from Cornwall to Northumberland.

The number of birds is an improvement on figures from 2000, when only five nests out of 13 proved fruitful. However, the hen harrier population is still perilously low, and they continue to be persecuted.

In a bid to help sustain the new population, the chicks are being tagged, and several birds will be radio-tracked over the winter to find out where they go and whether they return next spring.

Richard Saunders, English Nature's Hen Harrier Recovery Project Officer, said, "Reporting sightings is very important because it helps to

give information about the movements and habitats used by hen harriers away from their native area. Repeat sightings are just as important, to give information about length of stay and the longevity of the birds.

"Sightings should give as much information as possible, including location with OS grid reference, date, time, weather, colour of left and right wing tags with any identification number/letter and any information about habitat and the bird's activity."

Any sightings of the tagged birds should be reported to David Sowter, telephone 01772 749220, or email [davidsowter@freenet.co.uk](mailto:davidsowter@freenet.co.uk)

## Well done!

Eddie Hallam – winner of the Peak District and Derbyshire prize at this year's Derbyshire County Council Greenwatch Awards. He received £500 and a trophy for his work on Lea Water Meadows Nature Reserve. This was the first time the Peak District and Derbyshire Team had donated a prize and it will be awarded annually in the future.



picture courtesy of Derbyshire Times

Editor: Gordon Leel Tel 01733 455191 | Designed & printed by: Corporate Document Services, 7 Eastgate, Leeds LS2 7LY [www.cds.co.uk](http://www.cds.co.uk) on Evolution Satin (75% recycled post-consumer waste paper, Elemental Chlorine-free bleached), 17M.

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](mailto:gordon.leel@english-nature.org.uk)

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](mailto:alison.eley@english-nature.org.uk)

## Agreement safeguards MoD sites



Chris Flecher

English Nature has signed a new agreement with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to secure the future of wildlife-rich sites on MoD land. The signing underlines the close working relationship between the two organisations, bringing an existing agreement, first signed in 1988, up-to-date with new legislation.

Signing the Declaration of Intent at Hankley Common Training Area – Sir Martin Doughty, Chair of English Nature and Vice Admiral Peter Dunt, Chief Executive of Defence Estates.

## Now is the time for... winter wildlife

Continuing our expert series, English Nature Invertebrate Ecologist Dr David Sheppard fills us in on invertebrates in and out of hibernation during winter...



Roger Key/English Nature

"Winter is when most invertebrates are dormant; either hibernating or undergoing a resting phase in their life cycles. For some species though, winter is the time of peak activity. There are several moths which are adults during winter, including November moths, winter moths, early moth and spring usher.

"Some mayflies (*Baetis spp.*) actually fly in November and at least one species of stonefly is active as early as February. On mild days throughout the winter various flies can be seen basking in the sunshine: droneflies (*Eristalis spp.*), house-flies (*Musca spp.*) and bluebottles (*Calliphora spp.*) are the most familiar. In sheltered places, winter gnats (*Trichocera spp.*) can be seen in their mating dances all winter long.

"A carpet of snow is a great insulator and many invertebrates are active beneath the white blanket. A variety of animals can be seen running around

on the snow surface. Two very different types are both known as snow fleas (pictured above). There is the tiny springtail, *Hypogastura socialis*, which gather in hundreds on the snow surface and the weird-looking wingless scorpion fly, *Boreus hyemalis*, which is a predator of smaller animals living in mosses, but seems to take advantage of snow to disperse to new areas.

"In contrast, there are many species which are trying not to be conspicuous. Hidden amongst the rock piles and fallen wood are hibernating queens of social wasps and bumblebees. Winter temperatures are too low for these animals to move so they are easy prey for predators. On dry stems and fence-posts are ladybirds, often found hibernating in groups. In hollow trees or dense dry ivy are the hibernating adults of the early spring butterflies, such as peacocks, small tortoiseshells, commas and brimstones."

## NEWS IN SHORT

### Judge for yourselves

The Green Flag Award Scheme, the national standard for parks and green spaces, is looking for more judges. Volunteer judges come from a wide range of different backgrounds, including park management, environmental management, horticulture, arboriculture, grounds maintenance and community involvement. All expenses are paid. Key benefits of becoming a judge include personal development and training and the opportunity to benchmark and exchange ideas with other park managers and to receive a better understanding of the Green Flag Award standard and its processes. For an application form, contact the Civic Trust 0151 709 1969, or email [northernoffice@civic-trust.org.uk](mailto:northernoffice@civic-trust.org.uk)

### Local wildlife secures a further £1.5 million

English Nature's lottery-aided Wildspace! scheme has awarded a further £1.5 million, bringing the total funds awarded for Local Nature Reserves across the country to almost £5 million.

The latest pot of money will be used to benefit deprived communities and wildlife from Northumbria to Cornwall and Sussex. The overall aim of the scheme is to distribute more than £5 million by 2006 to help local communities improve, care for and enjoy their local environment.

Sir Martin Doughty, Chair of English Nature, said, "Close contact with nature is essential to everyone's quality of life, not only in the countryside, but also in our towns and cities."

### Open to all

The next open English Nature Council meeting will be held on 3 December at Great Northern Hotel, Peterborough. Porlock Ridge and Saltmarsh SSSI, Somerset, will feature on the agenda. The event starts at 9am and finishes around 5pm.



# brief update

## LETTERS

Dear Sir,

I have just been looking at the latest edition of your magazine. I was interested in your article 'Ancient Grassland Becomes SSSI' (English Nature Magazine September 2002) where you refer to, "the rare crested dog's-tail", whose presence apparently has conferred SSSI status on Long Lye Meadow.

As we have very many hundreds of sites where crested dog's-tail is commonly found, I wonder whether it would be possible for these to also be considered for SSSI status?

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Colin Pope, Ecology Officer  
for the Isle of Wight Council**

In reply...

Dr Colin Pope is absolutely right – crested dog's-tail is not a rare plant. On the contrary, it is rather common! Reference to the recently published *New Atlas of the British and Irish flora* shows that it occurs in 3,587 out of 3,859 (93 per cent) 10km grid squares covering Britain and Ireland.

What **is rare** is the traditionally managed hay meadow community found at Long Lye of which crested dog's-tail is a characteristic grass. Old meadows and pastures are very rich in plant species and, typically, a square metre of turf can contain upwards of 30 different species of herbs and grasses. Some old meadows contain plants that are genuinely scarce (for example, sulphur clover) or those that have declined over the last 40 years, such as the attractive green-winged orchid. However, the main value is the overall mix of often more widespread plants growing together.

Recent estimates for England indicate that less than 6,000 hectares of this species-rich grassland remain. This is why these glorious treasures are a priority habitat for conservation under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

**Richard Jefferson, Senior Grassland Ecologist Terrestrial Wildlife Team – English Nature**



Paul Glendell / English Nature

## Save our seals

In August this year, Phocine Distemper Virus (PDV) was confirmed in six common seals found on the south east coast of England. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is now funding research into PDV and its affect on the UK's seal population. Volunteers are being recruited to help with the monitoring of dead seals. Potential volunteers should send an email entitled 'PDV Volunteer' to sealstrandings@zsl.org or call 020 7449 6672.

## Moving with the times

Winter is upon us, or is it? According to new findings from the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity, and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), the seasons are becoming increasingly muddled up and many traditional events are now being thrown out of sequence.

Almost 18,000 volunteer phenologists (people who study the effect of climate on organisms) have gathered data showing that the arrival of spring is no longer constrained to its traditional March slot and autumn now

continues well beyond late October.

The Trust believes this may have serious consequences on many of our animals, insects and trees. Results from this spring show that some synchronous relationships between birds, insects and plants could become disrupted. Crucially, for many species, this could have serious implications for their future survival. As ancient woods become even more fragmented and isolated, some characteristic plants and animals may face further threats as the climate changes.

Higher than average temperatures from January to April this year led to almost every characteristic of this year's spring occurring earlier than 2001. On average, insects such as bumblebees and butterflies were three weeks early, while plants flowered two weeks ahead. Many birds, including the turtle dove, arrived a week earlier than usual.

The Woodland Trust is keen to involve more people in the phenology project. A simple recording form is available from the Nature's Calendar website [www.phenology.org.uk](http://www.phenology.org.uk)

## Two of a kind

This pair of bee-eaters usually nest in southern Europe, but chose to brighten up Bishop Middleham Quarry in County Durham this summer. The quarry is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve managed by Durham Wildlife Trust, in partnership with English Nature, and is home for the rare Durham argus butterfly.



Reproduced by kind permission of Paul Hackett

# Flora findings

England's protected sites are providing a lifeline for many wild plants which were once widespread across the English countryside – that's one of English Nature's conclusions following the publication of the New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora.

Many of our native species have declined since the 1950s and have become increasingly dependent on National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) and the rest of the protected sites network.

Botanical expert Simon Leach, who represented English Nature on the Atlas Steering Group, said, "Particularly in the lowlands, these places have become, quite literally, last refuges for many wild plants. Some of our rarest species – like pennyroyal, fen orchid and water germander – are now almost entirely restricted to SSSIs or NNRs."

Despite an increase in the area of land under arable cultivation since the 1940s, it's the wild flowers of arable habitats that have shown the greatest decline. Improved seed-cleaning techniques, increased use of fertilisers and herbicides and the shift from spring to autumn sown crops have all had an adverse impact on our arable flora.

## Five facts about the New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora

- The Atlas was published in September this year, exactly 40 years after the first plant Atlas produced by the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI)
- The book was put together by the BSBI, the Biological Records Centre and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), with support from Government departments in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic and Britain's nature conservation agencies, including English Nature
- More than 1,600 botanists took part in the survey, contributing to a database containing around nine million records
- The first Atlas survey adopted the 10 x 10 kilometre square of the national grid as its basic recording unit, which became the standard for all subsequent surveys attempting to map the distribution of other species groups, from mosses to millipedes and birds to butterflies
- 2,951 species were covered by the project, including 1,407 native species and 1,544 introductions. More than 750 had never been mapped before.



Simon Leach, one of English Nature's botanical experts

Among the declining species are many of our most typical arable flowers, like corn buttercup and corn marigold. In fact some are now so rare that they are listed as priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

(Above) Corn marigold and (right) the fen orchid are among our declining flowers

Grassland species like carline thistle, purple milk-vetch, field gentian, green-winged orchid and chamomile have declined too, while many species found in wet heaths and bogs are now extinct across large tracts of lowland England. These include great sundew, common butterwort and marsh lousewort.

Many introduced species, on the other hand, have increased dramatically in recent decades. But apart from a few troublemakers like Japanese knotweed, swamp stonecrop, Himalayan balsam and Spanish bluebell, most occur in artificial habitats and have had little impact on our native flora.

Some natives have increased too – for example, wood forget-me-not and Welsh poppy are grown in gardens and frequently turn up in the wild in new areas as garden escapes. A few seaside plants, like Danish scurvy-grass, reflexed saltmarsh-grass and lesser sea-spurrey, have increased dramatically since the early 1980s, spreading inland along the verges of salt-treated roads.

Simon added, "There have been winners and losers, and our job will continue to be focused on the species that are losing ground – trying to stop common plants from becoming uncommon and preventing the rarities from slipping into extinction. The New Atlas shows us which species and habitats we should be worrying about the most."

The Atlas costs £99.95, plus postage and packing, and is available from Oxford University Press, telephone 01536 454534.



Just a few weeks ago, nature conservation lost one of its greatest champions, **David Arnold-Forster**. Not only did he achieve an immense amount since joining as English Nature Chief Executive in January 2000, he also left a lasting impression with those that knew or worked with him. Here we celebrate his all too brief tenure with the organisation.

# A champion for conservation



Tony Bartholomew / English Nature

"David seemed to have a contact in almost every organisation you could think of. Soon after his start we met with the Country Landowners Association (CLA) in Yorkshire. This included visits to some upland areas looking at moorland restoration projects, at a time when the Countryside and Rights of Way Act was being discussed. CLA was very interested in the implications of open access, in particular to moorlands, and there was much good humoured banter when arriving at signs that read 'PLEASE DO NOT ENTER'. David suggested to CLA that they hadn't got much work to do in areas such as this, simply needing to bend over 'DO NOT' on the signs."

**Martyn Howat, General Manager**

"Full of enthusiasm, David brought an openness and informality to English Nature. Within the first few months he travelled around the organisation, meeting staff at all levels, and maintained these contacts over his time with us. His passion for nature conservation brought him to us, but very quickly his concern for individuals resulted in promoting new ways of working to facilitate more family friendly policies and challenging diversity issues. Convention and hurdles were not allowed to stand in the way. David was intent on opening up the world of nature conservation to everyone."

**Caroline Wood, Director of Resources**

"David was Chair of the Board to the Salisbury Plain LIFE Project, working with such partners as the Ministry of Defence, Defence Estates, Dstl Porton Down, RSPB, Butterfly Conservation, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. He was absolutely committed to the principles of working in partnership, reconciling differing objectives to achieve common goals for nature conservation."

David flanked by Major General Brian Plummer, DGTS (left), and Paul Toynon, Defence Estates, at the launch of the Salisbury Plain LIFE Project last year.



Paul Glendell / English Nature

This was evidenced by his turning up on our team building event while on a period of convalescence. The Project will miss his drive and commitment."

**Stephen Davis, Salisbury Plain LIFE Project Manager, Wiltshire Team**

"David's huge energy, innovation and commitment will be greatly missed in conservation. He brought skills honed in such different places as Bosnia and the commercial property world to innovative deal-making in favour of the environment. His memorial will be Sites of Special Scientific Interest in better condition, our last few remaining peatlands saved, one third more conservation sites under strong EU protection, and persuasive ideas for sustainable futures for upland communities and biodiversity. He was fun, he knew everyone in the world (and was related to anyone who was important!) and he is already missed. The best thing we can do is keep on making those deals he so relished, for the good of the countryside and nature that he loved."

**Baroness Barbara Young, Chair, English Nature 1998–2001**

"David was one of the reasons I sought the vacant Chair of English Nature. We had worked together at the Association of National Park Authorities, trying to raise the profile of Parks throughout Europe, especially by influencing agricultural reform. His organisational skills impressed me hugely and his energy was breathtaking."

"He was a human dynamo. His strategic thinking and partnership abilities had energised English Nature in his short period at the helm. Nature conservation in England is now firmly established as a key quality-of-life component of high importance to our collective well-being."

**Martin Doughty, Chair, English Nature**

"As English Nature's agriculture adviser when David arrived I quickly discovered that he knew more about farming than I did. David could talk to farmers, NFU committees, organic farmers or EU policy makers in a language they understood. He wanted always to find practical solutions, grounded in real farming practice, to conservation problems. This was key to his work on the Hills Task Force, whose report was rightly hailed as practical, but challenging thinking. With EU officials, he drew on his experience of arms negotiations to find practical Common Agricultural Policy reforms. In all his work he wanted to work with people and to make real progress."

**Jim Dixon, English Nature Senior Agriculture Officer 1999–2001**

"When David was invited to make a personal contribution to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) by chairing the UK Targets Group, he seized the opportunity with characteristic enthusiasm. Although no lover of process, he saw this group as an opportunity to 'reinvigorate target delivery'. Failing health prevented David chairing some meetings, but he still prodded us vigorously from the sidelines to maintain the course he had set. Well, we completed the course, achieving virtually everything planned. I am sure that this will be very evident in the present UKBAP Reporting Round, legacy to David's determined drive to get things done!"

**Dr Roger Mitchell, Manager, Species & Biodiversity Branch**

"David had great enthusiasm and during his time as Chief Executive of the North York Moors National Park Authority between 1994 and 1999, both members and staff had difficulty keeping pace with his energy and drive. Often when I was returning home late at night, I would pass the National Park headquarters to see a light shining in David's office. Even more often, when I was at home preparing for bed, the phone would ring – David on his mobile returning home after a meeting."

"It so happened that we had a visit to the National Park from Baroness Young when she was Chair of English Nature. She enjoyed her day with us and I knew she was most impressed by David. It was no surprise to me when, a few days later, he received a personal invitation to visit Peterborough to discuss with her the Chief Executive vacancy. The rest is history."

**George Sigsworth, Chair, North York Moors National Park Authority**

"This trip to the new viewing platform at Thorne Moors in April 2000 was one of David's first site visits in his role as Chief Executive. Typically, he took the opportunity to meet with and hear the views of members of the Thorne Forum, a local group devoted to the preservation of the Moors. He also visited the nearby Hatfield Moor where his experience of the vast, desolate fields of milled peat no doubt fuelled his ambition to turn them back to nature. An ambition he succeeded in fulfilling."

**Lawrence Jones-Walters, Team Manager**



Peter Roworth / English Nature

Taking a moment out on the new viewing platform at Thorne Moors. David shown here flanked left to right by Keith Duff, English Nature Director, Jeff Lunn and Bernard Fleming, Area Manager and Deputy Area Manager of the Humber to Pennines team, and Lawrence Jones-Walters.



Tony Bartholomew / English Nature

**David Arnold-Forster 1956–2002**

It was clear, even before he took up the role of Chief Executive, that David would leave his own very definitive stamp on English Nature. Earlier in his career he had carved out a reputation as a top flight negotiator for the Ministry of Defence, concluding a ban on chemical weapons in 1990 and earning an OBE for his role in setting up British bases in Bosnia during 1992. Later, as Chief Executive of the North York Moors National Park Authority, he aided its transition to administrative independence and brought farmers, landowners and local people on side with its objectives.

It was here that he caught the attention of the then Chair of English Nature, Baroness Young, and was invited to take up the baton at English Nature, where he immediately made his presence felt. A skilled negotiator, he worked with industry and Whitehall at the highest levels, while, at the same time, commanding a common touch by reaching out to farmers and land managers, anglers and conservationists in a way that brought their interests together.

He saw through the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, which greatly strengthened the protection of wildlife sites, clinched a deal to save the largest peat bogs in England from extraction, and fought for the future of our uplands. In truth, his work had hardly begun and it was shortly after actively taking up his role again, following a period of convalescence, that he was suddenly struck down again by his illness.

He will be remembered fondly not just for his achievements, but for his infectious enthusiasm, forward thinking approach, ability to understand opposing attitudes, humour, and unrelenting doggedness in the pursuit of English Nature's objectives. His wife Anita survives him.



# Secrets of the ocean wanderers

Marine turtles have hit the headlines once more this year, with sightings and strandings reported by the public from the Channel Isles to the north west coast of Scotland. With support from English Nature, work is now underway to learn more about these ocean wanderers.

Contrary to popular belief, marine turtles aren't found only in tropical waters. In fact, five of the world's seven species of marine turtle have been reported off UK shores and recorded in the UK Turtle database, created with help from English Nature's Species Recovery Programme.

The database, maintained by partner organisation Marine Environmental Monitoring, holds over 800 archived and recent records, the earliest dating back to 1748. But not all of these are of intentional visitors. One was of the primarily tropical hawksbill turtle. Five more were green turtles, one of which washed up dead in February on a beach close to Lochinver in Sutherland. The Kemp's ridley turtle, a critically endangered species that breeds only in the Gulf of Mexico, has been reported in UK waters just 29 times.

The overwhelming majority of turtle records, however, concern adult leatherback turtles and a smaller number of young loggerhead turtles.

"The UK sits at the very north western edge of the loggerhead's Atlantic range," says Peter Richardson, Species Policy Officer at the Marine Conservation Society (MCS). "Our seas are too cold for these stray juveniles, which probably originate from nesting beaches in the Caribbean and south east USA. Strong weather will disorient them and when they enter our seas they become cold, weak and moribund. Occasionally, some turtles wash up alive on our beaches."

In July, during a period of strong south-westerly winds, five stranded juvenile loggerheads were reported from beaches in Cornwall and the Channel Islands in the space of a fortnight. Two of these survived after careful rehabilitation at ① Newquay's Blue Reef Aquarium and, in August, were flown to the Canary



Islands for release back into warmer seas.

"Unlike other turtles, the giant leatherback, the largest species of marine turtle, is quite happy in our seas and regularly migrates to UK waters to feed on our jellyfish," continues Peter. "Throughout their global range leatherbacks face a variety of threats, including habitat destruction and direct exploitation for meat and eggs at their

tropical nesting beaches. Dramatic population declines have left leatherbacks critically endangered, and estimates of the global population of nesting females suggest there may be fewer than 35,000 remaining."

During their seasonal visits to UK seas, leatherbacks occasionally become entangled in the buoy ropes of static, bottom-set fishing gear such as crab

pots. It's not understood why this happens, but, since 1980, UK fishermen have reported an average of four accidental leatherback entanglements per year. Around 60 per cent of these entanglements prove fatal for the turtle.

"No fisherman wants to entangle a turtle and so it is in the interests of both fishermen and conservationists to find out how these entanglements can be

avoided," says Peter. "This summer, reports of leatherback sightings trickled in from fishermen, yachters and other sea users. Some of these reports are due to the publication of the UK Turtle Code, the first step we have taken to work with fishermen to find out more about turtles in UK waters."

The Code was produced earlier this year in consultation with the fishing industry and with the support of English Nature. Designed for use at sea, and distributed to thousands of fishermen and other sea-users throughout the UK, it encourages the immediate reporting of all encounters with turtles, and provides advice on how to safely disentangle them from fishing gear. The Code was produced by the Turtle Implementation Group (TIG), a coalition of organisations dedicated to implementing the Marine Turtles Grouped Species Action Plan. The TIG is co-ordinated by the MCS, and includes English Nature and the Environment and Heritage Service (Northern Ireland), who both provided funding to produce the Code and an Advisory Note along with species 'Champion' Cheltenham & Gloucester. The Note, which was produced primarily for local authorities and

public aquaria, expands on the content of the Code and includes information on the preliminary rescue and treatment of live, stranded turtles.

Both were launched in March at a Turtles/Fisheries Workshop co-ordinated by the MCS and funded by the Countryside Council for Wales and Cheltenham & Gloucester. The workshop was attended by fishermen from south west England and Wales, as well as representatives from a wide range of relevant organisations. These included The Herpetological Conservation Trust (who are also joint lead partners for the turtle plan), the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation, Defra, the Marine Turtle Research Group (University of Wales), SeaFish, the Sea Fishery Committees and the Wildlife Trusts.

"It was a very intensive session," says English Nature amphibian and reptile specialist Jim Foster, "and one intended to recognise the impact that entanglements are having on leatherback numbers. It was very useful having fishermen there to contribute to the discussion, which produced some very useful suggestions."

Points covered included the practicalities of a marine turtle survey, satellite tagging of leatherbacks in UK waters, reporting networks, surveys of fishing gear to establish how turtles become entangled, and the monitoring and reduction of marine litter.

"The findings are being documented to put forward positive suggestions for preventing entanglements," adds Jim. "Once that's completed, we can speak to the fishing industry about putting some of these ideas to the test."

If you would like copies of the UK Turtle Code and Advisory Note, or would like to find out more about marine turtles in the UK, contact Peter Richardson at the MCS on 01989 566017 or log on to [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)



# Preserving our maritime riches

Swift action is needed if we are to have a healthy maritime environment. A new report from English Nature is seeking to stimulate informed debate on the matter, while helping people to understand the importance of changing the way we use and manage our maritime environment.

(Below) Re-profiling shingle with a bulldozer.

(Bottom) England has a significant proportion of Europe's vegetated shingle, with the largest site being at Dungeness in Kent.



Peter Wakley / English Nature

People in England have a strong sense of identity with the sea, from fish and chips or a day at the beach, to the historical links we have made with the world from our shores. Living on an island is fundamental to our national and cultural identity and the state of our maritime environment should matter to us all.

Yet we first need to understand that environment. English Nature, as part of a commitment to Government to report the state of biodiversity, has just

published *State of Nature: Maritime – getting onto an even keel*. This describes the health of wildlife and habitats in our coasts and seas and will lead to the development of English Nature's Maritime Strategy in 2003. This in turn will form a key contribution to the Government's over-arching strategy for the marine environment, outlined in its Marine Stewardship Report in May this year.

The key conclusions of the report are sobering. "In spite of a range of important initiatives in the 1990s, our maritime ecosystems and their wildlife continue to be damaged as a result of human impacts and demands," says Roger Covey, English Nature Maritime State of Nature Project Officer. "Around 100 hectares of saltmarsh are being lost each year, nearly half of our shingle Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in unfavourable condition, and 60 per cent of our internationally important maritime conservation sites may be at high risk, or are already damaged by water quality problems."

Below the water, similar declines have taken place. "The estimated fish stocks in the North Sea have declined by around 35 per cent in the last 25 years, while seabed wildlife has shifted from largely long-lived and slow growing species, to opportunistic scavengers, which benefit from human disturbance."

There is a growing realisation and acceptance that the maritime environment needs to be managed in a way that looks at the whole picture,

that is, looking at action to maintain healthy ecosystems alongside appropriate human uses. This way, we can ensure benefits for both this and future generations. "This will require a shift in priorities and a new more integrated approach," adds Roger, "both in the way policies are set for the maritime environment and the way it is regulated. The Government and the European Commission have committed themselves to this 'ecosystem-based' approach and now English Nature will be working with the Government and others in using it to develop management to ensure a better future for our maritime wildlife."

For a copy of the report, contact  
Twoten Publications on 0870 1214177

(Far right) The coast between Cuckmere Haven and Holywell in Sussex is the longest undefended section of cliff between the Isle of Wight and The Wash.

(Right) Blakeney Dunes, Norfolk.



Peter Wakley / English Nature

"In spite of a range of important initiatives in the 1990s, our maritime ecosystems and their wildlife continue to be damaged as a result of human impacts and demands"

(Background image)  
Children rockpooling,  
at Rosemullion Head  
SSSI, Cornwall.



Roger Covey / English Nature

## Book review

### OAKS, DRAGONFLIES AND PEOPLE

CREATING A SMALL NATURE RESERVE  
AND RELATING ITS STORY  
TO WIDER CONSERVATION ISSUES



NORMAN W. MOORE

'Oaks, dragonflies and people: creating a small nature reserve and relating its story to wider conservation issues', by Norman W. Moore  
Published by Colchester: Harley Books, £15.95

Professor Norman Moore is one of our most highly regarded naturalists. Throughout his career, he has been Head of Toxic Chemicals and Wildlife Section at Monk's Wood, the Nature Conservancy Council's Chief Advisory Officer and was one of the founders of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). He retired in 1983.

His new book is divided into two distinct, but related, parts. In the first he transforms a bare field into a nature reserve with pond, wood and grassland – a story of trial and error in creative conservation. In the second part he relates this practical experience to the wider conservation scene – climate change, rainforest destruction and the future of the population.

It's a short book of 132 pages, including excellent colour photographs, and is scattered with the author's charming sketches. It is very thought provoking, packed with practical advice for those setting up and managing their own nature reserves (or smaller wildlife areas in gardens) and shows how connected everything is. It also introduces us to an important new concept – 'Future Care', care for the future in the present. As far as Professor Moore is concerned, that is what nature conservation is all about. I hope we heed his wise words.

Reviewed by Dick Seamons,  
English Nature's Enquiry Service



# Nature conservation: who cares?

This was the title of the second major event organised as part of English Nature's Reconnecting People and Nature initiative. Steve Berry, English Nature People and Wildlife Officer, was one of those present.

The deliberately provocative question received a resoundingly positive answer from the 120 conference delegates who crowded into the Bosworth Hall Hotel in Market Bosworth, Leicestershire from 30 to 31 October.

The event was jointly organised by English Nature and the British Association of Nature Conservationists (BANC) and ran at a hectic pace, with no fewer than 34 speakers on the bill. What made it different – and exciting – was that many of these were from organisations with which English Nature has had little or no previous contact, including the Youth Justice Board, the Housebuilders Federation and the British Heart Foundation. All the major conservation bodies were also represented.

Whether the subject was personal health, involving young offenders in constructive social projects, or finding space for new homes, no-one doubted that nature conservation had a relevance to – and could play a major role in improving – the quality of people's lives.

Sir Martin Doughty, the Chair of English Nature, set the tone in his opening address. He pointed out that social exclusion often ran parallel with environmental exclusion (ie. having no access to safe greenspace where nature could be enjoyed). "If conservationists are serious about reaching out to new audiences," he continued, "then they will have to talk their language and show that they have something valuable to offer. Safeguarding the future of rare and threatened species, essential though it is, is too remote an activity to mean very much to the great majority. We also need to help people to understand the vital role that nature plays in sustaining all human life and provide all with an opportunity to experience wildlife at first hand.

"Nature conservation," he added, "is far too important a subject to be left to nature conservationists alone, but this is what has happened. We now have to put the people element back into nature conservation or, in the words of our consultation document, to reconnect people with nature."

An account of the conference will appear in a special issue of ECOS, the journal of BANC, early next year. For a free copy e-mail [steve.berry@english-nature.org.uk](mailto:steve.berry@english-nature.org.uk)

Nigel Dobbyn



Events like this herbal plant walk in Middlesbrough help people of all ages to understand – and engage with – nature conservation. Dressed as a 'wise woman', Wildspace! Officer, Sue Antrobus discusses the folklore around our common plants.

## WHEN NATURE CALLS

A recent poll conducted by the BBC found that 36 per cent of people in Britain think bats are birds, 12 per cent believe camels are marsupials, 70 per cent scored nil when trying to describe what natural selection is in even the most simple terms, and 89 per cent scored nil in trying to define the word 'ecology'.

I am pleased to be able to reveal that most of our enquirers are far more knowledgeable about wildlife than that. A lot are keen wildlife gardeners, and we have had an excellent response to pieces in various gardening magazines about *Amphibians in your garden: your questions answered*. A lot of this excellent booklet is based on questions we are asked, so we feel pleased we have contributed to it. In fact, it's been so popular that we may follow it up with one on snakes in gardens.

With such a wonderful Indian summer, we are still getting questions more commonly asked in July and August – we received two enquires about snakes last week. Other popular enquiries at the moment include badgers digging up lawns and grey squirrels taking up residence in lofts.

I evicted my first mouse last week – they make a terrific din at 3am and I like my sleep. Our favourite query this month came from a lady wanting a hardwearing picnic bench. English Nature would not be my first port-of-call for this, but we always try to help with some suggestions!

When you read this, Christmas will be nearly upon us. Don't forget the garden birds at the festive season, especially in the unlikely event of it turning out cold and snowy!

By Dick Seamons  
English Nature's Enquiry Service

Mike Hammett / English Nature

A partnership project involving English Nature has resulted in one of Britain's rarest, native species, the sand lizard, being re-introduced into Surrey heathland.

## There's no place like home

John Gaighan

### Sand lizard fact file

- There are fewer than 8,000 adult sand lizards in the wild
- Sand lizards inhabit mature heathland and sand dunes where they live in areas of thick ground vegetation such as heather or marram grass
- Adults can grow up to 22 cms in length from nose to tail tip, with females growing slightly longer than males
- During the late spring the male develops very impressive vivid green flanks

- To date, the lizards have been reintroduced to Hampshire, Sussex, Devon, Cornwall and Berkshire.



The Surrey Heath Project, involving The Herpetological Conservation Trust (HCT), Surrey Heath Borough Council and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), saw 75 hatchlings released at Lightwater Country Park, Surrey, in September this year.

The area was prepared for the bare, sandy habitat the lizards need to lay eggs. More will be released over the next two years.

The project is one of a number of local initiatives being made possible by an agreement between English Nature and the HCT, a charitable trust formed to conserve Britain's threatened herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles).

As part of the Species Recovery Programme (SRP), English Nature will provide the Trust with £55,000 for each of the next three years to help

conserve the sand lizard, natterjack toad, pool frog, smooth snake and great crested newt.

English Nature Conservation Officer for Sussex and Surrey, Claire Kerr, said, "We welcome the reintroduction of the sand lizard to Lightwater Country Park. The sand lizard is still found in the county, but this joint project will contribute further towards the maintenance and re-establishment of a species which was once much more widespread across the Surrey heaths."

Dr Tony Gent, Chief Executive Officer of the HCT, said, "The release of these sand lizards is another significant step towards bringing this animal back to the areas where it was once found in Britain."

"The release of these sand lizards is another significant step towards bringing this animal back to the areas where it was once found in Britain"

(Above) Mike Preston (left), of the Herpetological Conservation Trust and Gordon Voller, of Surrey Heath Borough Council, releasing baby sand lizards at Lightwater Country Park.

Councillor Keith Bush, Surrey Heath's Leisure Portfolio Holder, added, "This project has shown how different organisations can work together for the benefit of our native wildlife."

The importance of partnerships will be highlighted at the next Species Recovery Programme conference on 26 February 2003, entitled Progress through Partnership. London Zoo will host the event, which will give SRP partners the opportunity to share best practice and to review progress and future direction in relation to the recently published England Biodiversity Strategy. Speakers will be drawn from English Nature's major partners, including the HCT.

For further details about the conference, contact Angie Brewell, of English Nature's Terrestrial Wildlife Team, on 01733 455 271, or email her at [angie.brewell@english-nature.org.uk](mailto:angie.brewell@english-nature.org.uk)



# Walking in the footsteps of dinosaurs

The Council of English Nature recently took a step back in time, when they visited England's first and only natural World Heritage Site on the Dorset and East Devon coastline.

**A**lmost a year after the area joined the ranks of the Great Barrier Reef and the Grand Canyon as one of the wonders of the natural world, English Nature's Council, including English Nature Chair Sir Martin Doughty, walked where dinosaurs had been before them to meet with the partners who bid for World Heritage status.

The site, mostly an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, was given the stamp of approval for its geology, which represents 185 million years of earth history in just 95 miles. Parts of the coast are world famous for fossils, and new discoveries are constantly being uncovered, including exceptionally well-preserved dinosaurs and dinosaur footprints. And the varied landscape lends itself to a diverse range of wildlife, including puffins and dolphins.

The role of English Nature in helping to conserve and promote the geological heritage of Dorset within the World Heritage Site was also considered as part of the three-day visit. All of the Dorset coast is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) because of its fascinating geology and features such as Chesil Beach and Durdle Door.

The Council also looked at other issues affecting the conservation of wildlife within Dorset, including heathland management, tourism and urban development. Members of the public also attended an open meeting of the General Committee of English Nature's Council at Carrington House Hotel, Bournemouth.

English Nature's Dorset Team Manager, Jim White, said, "With all of Dorset coast protected by SSSI designations for geology or its stunning wildlife, this accolade should not have come as a surprise. But it is still strange to think that we have responsibility for a natural heritage of world significance! Fortunately, there is an excellent and strong partnership of many agencies, local authorities and, of course, owners to make it all work, and English Nature is pleased to be supporting the World Heritage Site with advice and funding."

If you want to trace the past, winter is an ideal time to find fossils after rough seas have washed away soft and mud and clays. The World Heritage Team has produced a free mini-guide, available from Tourist Information Centres, visitor centres and museums.

For further details, contact Sally King on 01305 225091

(Background image)  
The joint systems and small scale thrusts at Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset

(right)  
Axmouth-Lyme  
Regis NNR

Peter Wakely / English Nature

Peter Wakely / English Nature

## WHAT'S ON? GUIDE

### NOVEMBER

NOV  
19

#### Offshore Wind Energy seminar

At the ImechE HQ, London. Entitled 'The Technical Challenge', this seminar is especially aimed at engineers with an interest in wind energy and its uses for the future.

Contact: Laura Feinburg, 020 7304 6841

NOV  
19

#### Creatures of the mosses

At Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR. Slide Show with Joan Daniels at Bettisfield Village Hall 7.30 to 9pm.

Contact: Joan Daniels, 01948 880362

NOV  
24

#### Children's Christmas crafts

Hatfield Forest NNR, Essex

Lots to make and do in preparation for Christmas. Minimum age 5 years. 11.00am – 1.00pm. £4.00 per child.

Contact: Jo Braddock, 01206 796666

NOV  
28

#### LIFE-Nature seminar

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. The event is now fully booked, but you can contact Christina Philp on 01733 455401 for information after the event.

### DECEMBER

DEC  
4

#### Aston Rowant NNR

Learn the art of identifying trees without their leaves! Meet at Aston Rowant main car park. The event is free.

Contact: Aston Rowant NNR office, 01844 351833

DEC  
7

#### Wildfowl Walk Wicken Fen NNR

Get trim in time for your Christmas dinner with this walk from 10am to noon. Prices are £3 for adults, £1.50 for children.

Contact: Wicken Fen Visitor Centre, 01353 720274

DEC  
7-8

#### Father Christmas trail Hatfield Forest NNR

Follow the dropped parcels to Father Christmas's grotto. Starts from 10am to noon and then noon to 2pm on both days. Booking is necessary, please state the age and sex of your children. £4 per child.

Contact: Jo Braddock, 01206 796666

DEC  
15

#### Christmas Biodiversity Task

Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR

Take away tree seedlings, Christmas trees and Yule logs from 10.30am to 1pm.

Contact: Joan Daniels, 01948 880362

Durlston Cliffs SSSI, Dorset



(right)  
Durlston Cliffs  
SSSI, Dorset

Peter Wakely / English Nature



# Where the buffaloes roam...

English Nature is carrying out an unusual method of managing vegetation at Chippenham Fen National Nature Reserve (NNR), Cambridgeshire – it has introduced Asian water buffaloes onto the site.

The buffaloes have been introduced in a bid to create an environmentally friendly and varied landscape on the Fen that is ideal for rare plants and invertebrates.

Cattle are normally used for this type of management, but they were not deemed suitable for the rough vegetation and wet conditions of the Fen. English Nature staff heard about Asian water buffalo being used on farms in Wales, and the first three buffaloes were bought from one of these farms.

Seven male buffaloes in all have been introduced on two 40 acre sites – the most recent addition came from Staunton Country Park in October this year, after the park's application for a licence to keep him was refused.

Assistant Site Manager for Chippenham Fen, Kevin Warrington, said, "With the buffaloes, we can create a vegetation structure which we wouldn't be able to achieve with machinery. Tractors cut vegetation down to the same level, but the buffaloes will create areas with both bare ground and longer vegetation. It is hoped that buffalo grazing will create the ideal habitat for invertebrates such as the silver-barred moth and rare flies and beetles.

"Obviously, we are monitoring plants and invertebrates in and out of the buffalo area to ensure the change is having a positive affect on the Fen."

Kevin and his team will be looking at the affects of the buffaloes on the vegetation structure in March 2003 to assess whether more buffaloes can be introduced. The whole project is set to last up to five years.



Paul Glendell / English Nature

## Asian water buffalo fact file

- It's the largest type of buffalo and can grow to around two-and-a-half tons. It has the greatest horn spread of any living cattle
- It is thought the species was domesticated in southern Asia in the third millennium BC.
- It is the most popular domestic animal in southern Asia, where it is used to till rice fields
- Asian water buffalo produce the milk for mozzarella cheese
- Its Latin name is *Bubalus bubalis*.

