

Summer 2010 Newsletter

Saving Spiked Rampion *Dominic Price, Plantlife*

Plantlife, the charity dedicated to protecting Britain's wild plants, fungi and lichens, and their habitats, has secured funding from SITA Trust for a project aimed at saving one of the UK's rarest plants, Spiked Rampion, from extinction.



Photo: Plantlife

Spiked Rampion is a truly spectacular wildflower, with unusual oblong spikes of cream flowers. Once a garden plant, grown for culinary and medicinal uses, this member of the Bellflower family is now legally protected due to its scarcity.

Known on the continent as White Rapunzel, it was the plant stolen by Rapunzel in the fairytale, leading to her imprisonment in a tower. Unfortunately in 21st century Britain, an aspiring Rapunzel would have difficulty, with Spiked Rampion now believed to occur at only ten sites, some with only one or two plants left. The species only grows in East Sussex and without intervention there is an immediate chance it will join the list of wild flowers lost from the UK.

The first phase of the project, starting in June 2010, involves an extensive survey of the known historical sites for the plant and neighbouring areas, with the hope of finding as yet undiscovered populations and to gather information as to why it may have vanished from several of these locations.

The plants are often associated with forest glades and rides, so the next phase of the project will involve working with landowners to recreate these conditions, not only benefiting Spiked Rampion but also a host of other species such as butterflies and birds, which prosper in well-managed open woodlands. In addition the plant is found on several road verges, illustrating the value these can have for wildlife.

The project comes at a vital time for this species, with populations reaching critically low levels and a very real risk of losing it altogether. Spiked Rampion is not only a wonderful plant in its own right, but is also an indicator species for well-managed healthy woodlands, able to support a range of other rare species.

For further information about the project contact Dominic Price, Species Recovery Officer dominic.price@plantlife.org.uk



Stepping stones for stags *Nida Al-Fulaij, People's Trust for Endangered Species*

The Stag Beetle is one of the largest native insects in the UK, growing up to 7cm. You are most likely to see males flying on warm evenings between May and August, looking for a mate. Females then lay eggs near decaying wood about one foot underground. Whilst adult beetles live for only a few weeks, larvae grow and feed for between three and seven years.



Photo: Graeme Lyons

With such a long larval stage, it is very important to protect Stag Beetle habitats. You can protect them in your area and ensure the remaining populations don't become isolated, by creating stepping stones - or log piles - for stags in parks and gardens.

- * Use broadleaved wood where possible, especially Oak, Beech or fruiting trees such as Apple or Pear. These support the richest insect communities.
- * Try and site the logs in partial shade to prevent them drying out.
- * Fresh logs with bark provide better and longer-lasting habitats.
- * The logs should be at least the thickness of an adult's arm.
- * Partially bury logs vertically in the soil so they retain moisture and increase numbers of visiting insects. Stag beetles need buried dead wood to lay their eggs near to ensure a good food supply for larvae.
- * Avoid making log piles too high, or the wood will dry out. Allowing plants to grow over them both retains moisture and provides shade for the Stag Beetle.



Photo: Maddy Davidson

Let the People's Trust for Endangered Species know about your log pile and send a photo by emailing stagbeetle@ptes.org

Mammals on Roads *David Wembridge, People's Trust for Endangered Species*

The nationwide *Mammals on Roads* survey is recording sightings mammals sited on road journeys for the tenth year this summer and celebrates with a new website. The site allows volunteers to record details of their routes and sightings on interactive maps, making analysis and feedback simpler and faster.



Photo: Hugh Clark

Roads have a big impact on the environment. They fragment habitats and are a significant cause of mortality in some species. Every year millions of animals are killed by traffic in Britain. By recording casualties, valuable information about the distribution and size of mammal populations can be gathered. To get a good picture, we need volunteers across the whole country to record as many routes as possible. Whether you spot something or not, the information is important; identifying where species are scarce as well as where they

are more abundant. Any route on a single-carriageway outside urban areas can be surveyed and if you're driving off on holiday, it's the perfect opportunity to take part.

About half the survey records are of rabbits, which although not of conservation concern, are a key prey species and can help maintain important habitats, such as calcareous grassland and dune slacks. Further down come hedgehogs, whose numbers look to be declining. Long-term data, gathered over many years, is essential if we're to spot underlying trends, and continuing *Mammals on Roads* is more important than ever. To take part this summer, contact us at mor@ptes.org or visit the website www.ptes.org/surveys in June.



Photo: Darin Smith

News

On 1 April 2010 **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010** came into force, updating and consolidating amendments made to the regulations since they were first made in 1994. The Regulations are the principal means by which the Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales, and apply in the terrestrial environment and

territorial waters out to 12 nautical miles. There are no substantive changes to existing policy however the layout of the Regulations and the order in which provisions occur has changed. http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100490_en_1

Researchers from the universities of Leeds and Sheffield have discovered a new species of bat to the UK, during a Europe-wide study of bat population ecology and genetics.

Alcathoe's Bat *Myotis alcathoe* was first discovered in Greece in 2001. It has now been found at several sites in the UK, including wooded areas of the South Downs known to be important for rare bat species. Alcathoe's similarity to Whiskered and Brandt's bats had left it unnoticed until now; however it could turn out to be well-established here.

Natural England has been running pilot projects for the last two years using standing advice rather than individual responses to consultations from local authorities on certain planning applications. Natural England is now looking at producing a set of national standing advice based on regional pilot projects in South East England and the East of England. Draft standing advice is expected to be available soon for external consultation.

Congratulations to Arun District Council and the Friends of Bersted Brooks, as **Bersted Brooks** on the outskirts of Bognor Regis, becomes Sussex's newest Local Nature Reserve.

People's Trust for Endangered Species is looking for volunteers to help survey traditional orchards across Sussex. No experience is necessary as maps and guidance will be provided. Please contact Anita Burrough 020 7498 4533 anita@ptes.org

Funding Deadlines

- SITA Small Grants Scheme (grants of £250 - £5000) **4 June 2010**
- SITA Enriching Nature Programme (grants of £25000 - £175000) **25 June 2010**
- Ecominds (grants up to £20000) **30 June 2010**
- Biffaward Flagship Scheme (grants of £150000 - £500000) **1 July 2010**
- Farm Resource Improvement Programme (grants up to £25000) **5 July 2010**
- Action Earth 2010 (grants of £50) **7 July 2010**
- Cemex Community Fund (grants of £1000 - £15000) **12 July 2010**
- Veolia Environment Trust (average grants of £25000-£40000) **30 July 2010**
- SITA Small Grants Scheme (grants of £250 - £5000) **9 August 2010**
- HLF Heritage Grants (grants over £5million) **30 September 2010**
- HLF Heritage Grants (grants of £1million - £5million) **11 October 2010**

Look out for

The **Natural England** report *Lost life: England's lost and threatened species*, which identifies nearly 500 animals and plants that have become extinct in England.

<http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/NE233>

The **UK National Ecosystem Assessment** report *Progress and Steps Towards Delivery*

<http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/Home/tabid/38/Default.aspx>

The results of the **Pond Conservation** Big Pond Thaw Survey

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/aboutus/News/latestnews/bigpondthawsurveyresults>

The **Environment Agency** publication *managing invasive non-native plants in or near fresh water* <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0410BSBR-e-e.pdf>

Growing Connections, the e-newsletter of the **West Weald Landscape Project**. Please contact Rich Howorth to receive this - 01273 492630 or westweald@sussexwt.org.uk

HM Government Departmental Adaptation Plans, setting out each department's key risks and priorities on climate change and Carbon Reduction Delivery Plans
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/programme/across-government.htm>

Upcoming Events

June 10-11: The Ancient Tree Forum summer visit takes place near Woodbridge, Suffolk
<http://frontpage.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum/atfevents/events.htm>

June 16: A Pond Training Day run by the Million Ponds Project will be held in Brighton. Contact Jo Fever 01865 483249 or jofever@pondconservation.org.uk

June 28-30: Floodplain Meadows Partnership workshop covering eco-hydrology of floodplain meadows, NVC communities, and management restoration principles at Preston Montford Field Studies Centre <http://www.floodplainmeadows.org.uk/content/events>

July 1-6: The European Youth Perspective Conference on Biodiversity takes place in Gheel, Belgium providing a forum for European youngsters to learn about biodiversity.
<http://www.youpec2010.eu/>

July 13-14: The first Global Business of Biodiversity Symposium is held in London. The conference will demonstrate to business how it is impossible to address climate change, water scarcity and human rights without considering biodiversity
<http://www.businessofbiodiversity.co.uk/>

September 13-16: International Association for Landscape Ecology conference *Future Landscape Ecology* is held in Brighton <http://www.iale.org.uk/conference2010>

November 2-4: Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management conference *Beyond 2010: Missed Opportunities, New Targets* is held in Dublin
<http://www.ieem.net/conferences.asp>

Is there something we should know about? Got an article you would like us to include?

Email Laurie with the details if you would like something included in a future newsletter
The deadline for submissions for the next edition is 18 August 2010.

Laurie Jackson
Conservation Officer-Biodiversity
Sussex Biodiversity Partnership
Woods Mill
Henfield
West Sussex
BN5 9SD.

Telephone: 01273 497551
Email: lauriejackson@sussexwt.org.uk