



Winter 2010 Newsletter

New lease of life for Woods Mill river *Sussex Wildlife Trust*

The Environment Agency (EA) and Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) have started work on an exciting project to restore the stream at SWT's Woods Mill nature reserve in Henfield, West Sussex.

The work will re-naturalise the area to include a fully functioning river system reconnected with its floodplain. It will create new habitat for wetland bird species such as Snipe, Kingfisher and Little Egret as well as for dragonflies and bats who feed on insects attracted to the water and for Sea Trout (adults and juveniles).



Photo: Sussex Wildlife Trust

The stream has been moved from its present course to the lowest point in the floodplain by the creation of gentle meanders, riffles (areas of fast flowing water) and oxbow lakes. During the winter, water will overwhelm the surrounding fields creating valuable wetland grazing marsh - ideal habitat for wildfowl and wetland birds.



*Photo: Amy Lewis/
Sussex Wildlife Trust*

The line of the old river will still retain some water, providing a static pool for insects and small mammals such as the Water Shrew. In addition, the EA is constructing a fish pass upstream of the restoration site to allow fish to access new breeding areas.

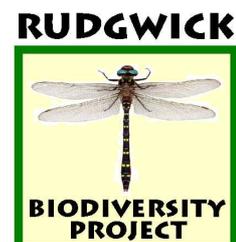
Hannah Wright from the EA said, 'The new fish pass will allow Sea Trout and other fish species to access areas previously virtually impassable. Together with the restoration scheme, it will improve a large stretch of the Woods Mill Stream for many species'.

Steve Tillman, Reserves Officer at SWT said, 'When the project is completed there will be greater habitat diversity on site enhancing everyone's enjoyment of a visit to Woods Mill nature reserve. Visitors will be able to walk around the new landscape (when it is not flooded) and see the river course develop and change into a new valuable wetland habitat from specially constructed viewing platforms.'

Making a difference in Rudgwick *Rudgwick Biodiversity Project*

West Sussex is well known for its beautiful landscape, from wetlands to coastal paths and the rolling downs. In Rudgwick we have our own, smaller, idyll.

Rudgwick Biodiversity Project is a community run, volunteer group who endeavour to provide a sustainable and environmentally rich habitat for native species to flourish. We have been active for almost three years and have transformed an area of rubbish strewn, woodland into a thriving green space well used by wildlife, residents and visitors alike. We are fortunate to have the support of Rudgwick Parish Council and the invaluable assistance of West Sussex County Council's Low Weald Rangers, without whom we could not have achieved our goals.



Over the past two years we have noticed a considerable increase in wildlife including butterflies, moths, dragonflies, dormice and birds. We conduct animal, fungi and plant surveys at least twice each year, including bat walks and a spring dawn chorus at 4.00am, which is always surprisingly well attended, perhaps the draw is the bacon sandwiches and tea afterwards! Some of our volunteers were on the news recently having hand dug a pond that is now filling up with rainwater and establishing its own ecosystem.



Photo: Anne Cole

Throughout the year, there are various family activities aimed at educating the next generation in how to look after the environment and use resources wisely. A favourite is our regular bushcraft days where we teach children to build shelters, use tools safely, make camp fires, cook lunch, track wildlife, and, most importantly, ensure they leave no trace behind them. We hope they will take this knowledge with them to be the guardians of the future.

There is still a huge amount of work to be done, including another area of under-managed woodland and a park we would like to tackle. We are always on the lookout for willing individuals to join our team and would welcome volunteers of any age or ability. We meet at 1.00pm on the last Sunday of every month at King George V Playing Fields, Guildford Road, Rudgwick, RH12 3JJ. For more information contact us aankle@aol.com or 01403 823147, visit our website www.rudgwickbio.weebly.com or just turn up. All our activities are free and you will receive tea and biscuits in return for your labour.

Nagoya - a summary of the outcomes *Dr. Bob Bloomfield, Natural History Museum/IYB-UK Partnership*

On 7 November, Ahmed Djoghlaif the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity wrote to the IYB-UK secretariat to thank the partnership for the *fantastic* UK International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) programme *having raised biodiversity issues to the top of the agenda in the UK.*



We now know that the Nagoya Conference of the Parties (COP-10) itself has achieved outcomes that are broadly applauded by conservation organisations. It has set targets for 2020 that are stretching but realistic, while paving the way for some of the international political and financial difficulties around biodiversity protection to be addressed on a much more vigorous scale - in line with Ban Ki-moon's statement that *business as usual was no longer an option* and that a sea change in measures to protect biodiversity has to emerge.



IYB has highlighted some important changes in the public narrative around how biodiversity and the issues around it are understood. I believe there are significant reasons to try and learn from how the partnership here in the UK responded to the UN call, especially if the aspirations raised by Nagoya are going to become embedded and, in due course, delivered in the UK and internationally.

The targets from Nagoya go much wider than the previous agreement, especially around acknowledging that the underlying causes of biodiversity loss are within society. The targets include a strategic aim that the understanding of biodiversity has to be embedded across society, through citizens and through private business as well as through governments, with effective monitoring, auditing and reporting at all levels and for informed choice down to the level of consumers.

This will be both an exciting and a daunting challenge for our elected leaders and for all of society. It will require an unprecedented drive to improve biodiversity literacy in schools and to build expertise and capacity in the workforce and understanding in society. A summary of the outcomes is on the CBD website <http://www.cbd.int/nagoya/outcomes/>

Progress towards a marine ecological network *Laurie Jackson, Sussex Wildlife Trust*

Our seas are a vital part of the natural environment providing us with essential services such as carbon dioxide absorption. Currently less than 1% of the UK's seas are protected; however work is underway to develop recommendations for Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) for the inshore and offshore waters of our region.



*Photo: Paul Naylor/
Sussex Wildlife Trust*

MCZs are to be set up under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. This legislation will ensure a system of Marine Protected Areas is established by 2012 to help ensure we have an ecological network beneath the waves.

In the south east, the Balanced Seas project team is responsible for assisting stakeholders in developing recommendations for MCZs. The team are aided by Ecological Network Guidance, which specifies how much of each habitat should be protected and how far apart these areas should be. The Balanced Seas stakeholders have now identified over 20 Broad Areas of Interest in the south east, to look at in more detail for potential MCZ sites.



*Photo: Martha Tressler/
Sussex Wildlife Trust*

The recommendations of the Balanced Seas Regional Stakeholder Group will be submitted to Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in June 2011, along with those of the other three regional projects. The collated recommendations will be submitted to Ministers in October 2011 and once Ministers have decided which sites will be designated, a formal public consultation will take place, prior to designation by the end of 2012. To find out more about Balanced Seas visit <http://www.balancedseas.org/>

Medmerry Managed Realignment scheme welcomed *Natural England*

Welcoming the announcement by Chichester District Council who yesterday approved the Medmerry Managed Realignment Scheme for western Selsey, Natural England says that this is a fantastic decision for the sustainable flood and coastal protection for the Selsey area and the best outcome for local people and businesses.

Wanda Fojt, western area manager for Natural England in the south east, says 'first and foremost this is a massive and vitally important community and landscape flood protection scheme which embraces adaptation to sea level rise rather than fighting the forces of the sea and building ever higher sea walls in the same place.'

'The Medmerry realignment scheme will also be great for the natural environment, creating some 300 hectares of new coastal habitat. Around the Solent, fixed coastal defences combined with rising sea levels have meant that we are steadily losing large areas of intertidal habitat such as saltmarshes, which are internationally important for their wildlife as well as providing an additional 'soft' defence against the sea. The Medmerry scheme will help greatly to make good some of these losses.'

'Natural England anticipates that new habitats at Medmerry will include areas of mudflats, saltmarsh and coastal grassland. This is great for a range of wildlife, from wintering migrant and breeding wading birds and wildfowl, such as Redshank, Snipe and Ringed Plover, to a variety of mammals and reptiles such as Water Vole, Slow-worm, Grass Snake and Common Lizard. In addition to flood protection, this scheme will provide fantastic opportunities to improve access for local people and visitors, with the option of new footpaths, cycle paths and bridle paths. Such provision has been planned very carefully to ensure that it meets the needs of the local community, wildlife and visitors', she says.

Bracklesham Bay is one of the stretches of coastline most threatened by sea level rise and the shingle ridge which acts as a defence is now at risk of breaching annually and no longer provides sufficient protection to the low lying land and properties inland. The Pagham to East Head coastal defence strategy identified that the best solution for this stretch of coast would be to realign the sea defences inland, working with the force of the sea and constructing new stronger defences inland. This will not only provide a much higher standard of protection for the local community, but also allow new, once-lost, wildlife habitats to be recreated, which will themselves help absorb the force of the waves. This is a very forward looking approach to managing our coastline and one which benefits people and wildlife together.

Wanda Fojt adds 'Natural England believes that the Environment Agency's work with communities, including local town and parish councils, resident groups, businesses, conservation and recreation groups, throughout the development of the scheme has helped create positive acceptance of the need for change in the way the defences have been managed; a great example of working with partners and community engagement.'

Stepping stones for stags - how you can help *People's Trust for Endangered Species*

The People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) is campaigning to create suitable habitat for the charismatic but threatened Stag Beetle.

Dead and decaying wood is ideal for the Stag Beetle and many other insects. Larvae live for up to seven years in decaying wood, before emerging as beetles to breed. These insects don't travel far and the number found in an area depends on the availability of habitat at the time the adult female laid her eggs several years earlier. A female lays her eggs where she emerges if there is sufficient dead wood, but otherwise needs to find somewhere else. Our general tendency to tidy green spaces can threaten these vulnerable insects, as places for them to shelter are lost or isolated, leaving fewer suitable areas for egg laying.



Photo: Graeme Lvons

A simple, effective way to help is to ensure the Stag Beetle has a good supply of dead wood and can travel around easily by leaving tree stumps or creating stepping stones. PTES have produced easy-to-follow instructions for *Stepping Stones for Stags*, which can make a great community activity http://www.ptes.org/files/861_stepping_stones.pdf

Community Wildlife Action *Laurie Jackson, Sussex Wildlife Trust*

Do you dig, cut or build for wildlife? If you are involved with a community group like the Rudgwick Biodiversity Project that is working to improve the natural environment in your patch, we would love to hear from you. We would like to hear about all the positive work being carried out for nature in Sussex to ensure the contributions of your group towards targets in the Biodiversity Action Plan are recognised. To tell us about your activities contact Laurie lauriejackson@sussexwt.org.uk 01273 497551.

News

During the **Comprehensive Spending Review** (CSR) period, Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) will reduce resource spending by 29%, capital spending by 34% and reduce the administration budget by 33%. Defra will reprioritise its spending, focusing tax payer's money on British farming and food production; enhancing the environment and biodiversity; and supporting a green economy resilient to climate change. <http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/news/2010/10/20/comprehensive-spending-review/>

The **Forestry Commission** (FC) has had confirmation the level of grants it administers under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Plan for England (RDPE) has not been altered for the remainder of the spending round which concludes in March 2014. As it stands in South East England there are plenty of grants available up to 2014 in all six grant types. The 80% Woodland Improvement Grant target areas have increased to cover the main AONBs and the National Parks in the south east. It is anticipated there is likely to be an underspend of grant this year as some owners are backing out of planting schemes due to high cereal prices and because a lot of claims were paid early last spring. If you plan to undertake work this autumn on work agreed for payment after 1 April 2011, please get your claim in early as FC should be able to pay for work completed this spring out of this year's budget, freeing up more funds for next year.

As part of the CSR settlement Defra announced the **Higher Level Stewardship** (HLS) budget will grow by 83% by 2013/14 as compared with 2010/11. This increase is within an overall RDPE budget that will be maintained over the next three years. Because of the high level of new HLS agreements already approved so far this year, Natural England have temporarily suspended further approvals while they assess with Defra the effects of the new budget profile. This is necessary because new commitments made this year impact on budgets for subsequent years. Farmers who have already been formally offered agreements will not be affected and will have a start date as indicated in their offer. It is important to stress HLS remains open and farmers are encouraged to continue applying.

The **White-clawed Crayfish** *Austropotamobius pallipes* has this month been upgraded from *vulnerable* to *endangered* on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The ranking gives an indication of how likely a species is to becoming extinct and experts warn the species, the UK's only native freshwater crayfish, could become extinct here within the next 30 years.

There are reports of a new invasive non-native species in the UK. The **Killer Shrimp** *Dikerogammarus villosus* has so far only been found in Cambridgeshire, but anyone who suspects they may have found this species is asked to email a photograph to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology for identification alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk

A **research list** is currently in preparation on behalf of Sussex Biodiversity Partnership to send to local universities for student research projects. If you would like to add project ideas to the list please contact Laurie lauriejackson@sussexwt.org.uk 01273 497551.

Funding Deadlines

- HLF Heritage Grant (£50000+) **14 December 2010**
- Community Sustainable Energy Programme (up to £50000) **17 December 2010**
- British Entomological and Natural History Society (£500-£1000) **31 December 2010**
- Pond Conservation Trust Pond Digging Fund **January 2011**
- SITA Fast Track Fund (up to £10000) **4 January 2011**

- Cemex Community Fund (£1000-£15000) **26 January 2011**
- HLF Heritage Grant (£50000+) **16 February 2011**
- SITA Fast Track Fund (up to £10000) **21 February 2011**
- HLF Landscape Partnerships (£250000-£2million) **28 February 2011**
- SITA Enriching Nature Programme (up to £120000) **28 February 2011**
- SITA Core Fund (up to £50000) **21 March 2011**

Look out for

Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

Buglife has produced management sheets for eight BAP listed invertebrates, six of which have been historically recorded in Sussex. These sheets have been developed with funding from Defra and contain management advice and stewardship options
<http://www.buglife.org.uk/conservation/currentprojects/Habitats+Action/Farmland>

A draft Environment Strategy for East Sussex is now available on-line with a link to an online consultation questionnaire <http://www.askcasper.org.uk/speakup/environment>. The consultation closes on 11 February 2011.

Upcoming Events

- **December 1-3:** The International Conference on Biodiversity *Biodiversity and the Millennium Development Goals* takes place in Frankfurt/Main, Germany.
- **December 14:** A talk organised by the Zoological Society for London on *Investing in natural capital and green infrastructure* takes place in London.
- **January 11-12:** A joint British Ecological Society-Natural England Meeting *Adapting Conservation to a Changing Climate* takes place in London.
- **17 March 2011:** *Making Connections: Green and Blue Infrastructure* takes place in London.
- **March 23:** The IEEM spring conference *Invasive Species: New Natives in a Changing Climate?* takes place in London
- **April 13-14:** The Institute of Chartered Foresters hold their national conference *Trees, people and the built environment* in Birmingham.
- **August 18-23:** The British Ecological Society holds the 11th INTECOL Congress *advancing ecology and making it count* in London.



Photo: Alan Price, Gatehouse Studio/
Sussex Wildlife Trust

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

Contact Laurie with the details if you would like something included in a future newsletter
lauriejackson@sussexwt.org.uk 01273 497551

The deadline for submissions for the next edition is 21 February 2011.