



# Spring 2011 Newsletter

**First for Britain on a Sussex Wildlife Trust Reserve** *Graeme Lyons, Sussex Wildlife Trust*



Photo: Mark Telfer

This is *Quedius lucidulus* and it's a species of rove beetle new to Britain that was discovered by Mark Telfer during a deadwood invertebrate survey of the Sussex Wildlife Trust reserve The Mens, which was funded by the West Weald Landscape Partnership.

Rove beetles are a difficult group; there are more species of rove beetle in the UK than there are species of macro moth! This is a remarkable find and the fallen dead tree where the three specimens were trapped supported many more rare and scarce invertebrates including a single specimen of *Oxylaemus cylindricus*, a beetle thought to be extinct in the UK since the 19th Century until it was found by Mark at Ebernoe Common (another SWT reserve) in 2009. We had great expectations from the fallen Beech from the moment we set eyes on it but I don't think anyone expected it to be quite so productive.

The Saproxylic Quality Index for the site is 476.3, making The Mens the 39th best site for deadwood beetles in the country and the 4th best in Sussex. An Index of Ecological Continuity of 54 shows the site is of national importance for these fascinating invertebrates. In total, 10 RDB species and 38 nationally scarce species were recorded at The Mens during the survey!

What other exciting finds await discovery in Sussex? Read more about Graeme's findings across Sussex in his blog <http://analternativenaturalhistoryofsussex.blogspot.com/>

**Sussex has some of the best chalk streams** *Fran Southgate, Sussex Wetland Landscapes Project*

In 2009, a survey of chalk streams in Sussex discovered springs and chalk streams that were extremely rare even at the UK level. Sussex proved to have some fine examples of 'near-natural' chalk streams, and also some exceptionally interesting and rare habitats associated with others. It was clear that the best and most natural chalk streams flowed through patches of ancient woodland on the South Downs.



Photo: Nigel Holmes

In 2010 a further 112 potential chalk streams were surveyed. More national and local gems were found with four of the streams quoted to be of exceptionally high interest and six streams of very high interest. This included a one kilometre stretch of river at Sutton, which was declared as possibly the most natural chalk stream in the UK, and another stream at Poynings with 'incredible rare chalk waterfalls'. Sussex chalk streams are also unique because they tend to be fast running streams down steep slopes, instead of slow flowing rivers on low land.

The South Downs provides over 70% of the drinking water we use in Sussex, through water pumped from natural, clean underground reservoirs which gather under the South



Photo: Nigel Holmes

Downs National Park. These underground reservoirs are also the source of water for our rare chalk streams. They help to show a very synchronous relationship between humans our local environment and protected landscapes. If we take too much of this naturally cleaned water for our own use, we have a huge impact on some of the rarest habitats and species in the UK and in the world. A little thought to peruse on next time you turn on the tap perhaps?

## **Kew Millennium Seed Bank and Weald Meadows Initiative - Seed Training and Collection Results 2010** *Dawn Brickwood, Weald Meadows Initiative*

Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI) working with Kew has over the years produced a target list of WMI meadow species, recommended for collection, bulking up and further research. In 2010 the Weald Meadows Group (WMI) highlighted the need for additional wildflower seeds and plugs for trials at Sheffield Park and Bloomers Valley - Wakehurst.

Utilising the local knowledge of the WMI, the collection species list was refined with a corresponding list of suitable donor meadows. The WMI Officer carried out initial surveys, liaising with landowners willing to provide meadows for hand collections. Kew was also lucky enough to acquire volunteer Chris Skinner, who was available for summer seed collecting, allowing addition of species' fruiting and collecting times to the work plan.



Photo: Dawn Brickwood

Progress illustrated the need for increased knowledge and skills to carry out high quality hand harvests of meadow seed in the optimum conditions. Michael Way, Millennium Seed Bank's (MSB) Head of Collecting and Network Support organised training in early July with Iain Parkinson. The morning session, held at the MSB, was a presentation on a potential collection, covering topics such as; target species, genetic diversity, physical quality, ripeness, availability and finally the decision to collect or not. The afternoon was spent in the diverse meadows of Bedelands Local Nature Reserve, with harvesting teams making successful collections of Yellow Rattle and Red Clover. The day was very informative and well received; we had begun the process of collecting, safe in the knowledge that the seed was destined for world-beating processing and storage facilities!



Photo: Laurie Jackson

Meadow seed collecting continued apace into July but it quickly became clear that if we were to collect our target species and desired numbers, we were going to need more help! The MSB's Stephanie Miles and team stepped into the breach and helped harvest 40+ collections from 15 meadow holdings, resulting in 25 single species of wildflower. Seed collections vary in size, with an average of 50000 per collection. This is the estimated number of good seeds following cleaning and an initial quality assessment, with the germination potential >85% seeds germinating, based on previous MSB results for those species. For more information contact Dawn Brickwood, Weald Meadows Initiative [meadows@highwealdlandscapetrust.org](mailto:meadows@highwealdlandscapetrust.org)

## **News**

A serious **tree disease** never previously found in the UK has been confirmed at Balloch Castle Country Park on the shores of Loch Lomond, Scotland. Forestry Commission scientists have confirmed that *Phytophthora lateralis*, a fungus-like pathogen that kills

trees' roots, has killed at least one Lawson's Cypress Tree, with many others in the park having symptoms consistent with *P. lateralis* infection. Twenty-seven dead and dying Yew trees in the park are also being tested to try to establish the causes of their condition.

The **invasive shrimp** *Dikerogammarus villosus* has been found in Wales. The species first reported in Cambridgeshire, has now been confirmed by the Environment Agency at Cardiff Bay and Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir in Port Talbot. Originally from central-eastern Europe, this predatory shrimp feeds on native shrimps, young fish and insect larvae; altering habitat ecology. Anyone who suspects they have found this species is asked to email a photograph to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology [alert\\_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk).

There were over 15,000 responses to a call for ideas on the **Natural Environment White Paper**. This is a record number for a Defra consultation, proving that people want a positive change in the future of the natural environment, which underpins our economic prosperity, health and wellbeing. The aim of the White Paper, to be published this spring, is to set out a clear framework for protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

A new survey in 2010 found fewer sites than expected for the rare wildflower **Spiked Rampion**. Plantlife launched a project in early 2010 to save one of the UK's rarest plants (found only in East Sussex), from extinction. The project, funded by SITA Trust, began with a survey to find out how many plants survive and how healthy populations are - but results reveal only eight sites remain, with less than ten plants at five of these sites.

## Funding Deadlines

- Gatwick Airport Community Trust (grants of £250 - £5000) **21 March 2011**
- SITA Core Fund (grants up to £50000) **21 March 2011**
- Community Trees Fund (projects between £100 - £700) **31 March 2011**
- Trees for Schools Fund (projects between £100 - £700) **31 March 2011**
- HLF Heritage Grants (grants over £50000) **11 April 2011**
- SITA Fast Track Fund (grants up to £10000) **18 April 2011**
- Grassroots Endowment Fund (grants up to £2000) **28 April 2011**
- Southern Water Fund (grants of £500 - £2000) **28 April 2011**
- Veolia Environmental Trust (grant of £25000 - £40000) **28 April 2011**
- Waterways Trust Wildlife Grants (grants up to £1000) **30 April 2011**
- HLF Heritage Grants (grants over £50000) **19 June 2011**
- SITA Fast Track Fund (grants up to £10000) **20 June 2011**

## Look out for

The **Community Networking Project** 2011 questionnaire, designed by GreenSpace for community and friends groups - the deadline for completion is 11 March 2011. [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CommunityNetworkingProject2011?dm\\_t=0,0,0,0,0](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CommunityNetworkingProject2011?dm_t=0,0,0,0,0)

The **Weald Meadows Group** has 14 large colourful *Vanishing Meadows* exhibition panels available for any organisation or garden who would like to display them over spring/summer 2011. The height and width dimensions are 1500mm x 800mm each - please contact [meadows@highwealdlandscapetrust.org](mailto:meadows@highwealdlandscapetrust.org) for more information.

**Natural England** has launched a range of conservation guides. Designed to support land managers with Environmental Stewardship agreements but of interest to anyone looking to discover how wildlife habitats can be looked after, these illustrated guides provide information on how different conservation techniques can support a variety of species.

[http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/publications/evidence%20and%20analysis-technical%20information%20notes%20\(tin\)](http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/publications/evidence%20and%20analysis-technical%20information%20notes%20(tin))

**GB Non-native Species Secretariat** Report *The Economic Cost of Invasive Non-native Species on Great Britain* <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/index.cfm?sectionid=59>

**Pond Conservation** has launched the second edition of *The Pond Book: A Guide to the Management and Creation of Ponds*. The book illustrates the value of ponds; takes a fresh look at a range of management issues; and helps you decide best solutions for your pond.

A team from **Sussex Wildlife Trust** will be running in the Brighton Marathon on Sunday 10 April [http://www.everydayhero.co.uk/charity\\_profile/fundraisers/43](http://www.everydayhero.co.uk/charity_profile/fundraisers/43)

The **Sussex Biodiversity Partnership** website has been updated with pages on priority marine habitats <http://www.biodiversitysussex.org/habitats/>. You will also find a student research list - if you would like to suggest a project, contact Laurie (details below).

## Upcoming Events

- **March 10:** The Riverfly Partnership Conference *Your Rivers - their future* takes place in London <http://www.riverflies.org/index/conferences.html>
- **March 23:** IEEM Conference *Invasive Species: New Natives in a Changing Climate?* takes place in London <http://www.ieem.net/ieemspringconference2011.asp>
- **March 28-30:** BES Symposium *Forests and global Change* takes place in Cambridge [http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/meetings/current\\_future\\_meetings/2011\\_annual\\_symposium/index.php](http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/meetings/current_future_meetings/2011_annual_symposium/index.php)
- **April 6-8:** Environ Colloquium *Environmental challenges and opportunities for the next decade* takes place in Cork <http://www.esaiweb.org/content/environ2011/>
- **April 8-9:** British Herpetological Symposium takes place in Bangor <http://www.arguk.org/details/34-british-herpetological-symposium>
- **April 14:** The River Restoration Centre Conference *Managing Rivers at the Local and Catchment Scale* takes place in Nottingham <http://www.therrc.co.uk/RRC%202011%20Draft%20Programme.pdf>
- **September 5-7:** A Spatial Ecology and Conservation Conference takes place in Birmingham <http://www.ert-conservation.co.uk/SEC1-Homepage.htm>
- **September 6-8:** IALE Conference *Landscape ecology and ecosystem services* takes place in Telford <http://iale.org.uk/conference2011>
- **September 13-15:** Wessex Institute of Technology *First International Conference on Lake Sustainability* takes place in the New Forest <http://www.wessex.ac.uk/11-conferences/lakesustainability-2011.html>
- **September 16-18:** The National Bat Conference takes place in Warwick [http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/national\\_bat\\_conference.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/national_bat_conference.html)
- **September 22-27:** The 8<sup>th</sup> International Dormouse Conference takes place in Ostritz, Germany [http://www.senckenberg.de/root/index.php?page\\_id=13771&preview=true](http://www.senckenberg.de/root/index.php?page_id=13771&preview=true)



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  
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The deadline for the next edition is 23 May 2011.