

Autumn 2009 Newsletter

Hazel Dormouse Update *Dawn Scott, Sussex Mammal Group*

In March this year we held the first Sussex dormouse meeting to bring together people interested in dormice across the county. Over 30 people attended, and as a result we set up the Sussex Dormouse Network, with names of over 45 people working with dormice in Sussex. This meeting helped us to determine what we currently know about dormice in Sussex - historical records, what sites have been surveyed and when, how many monitoring sites we have, and what capacity there is to extend surveying and monitoring.



Photo: John Knight

We know dormice have been recorded throughout Sussex, but many of the sites urgently need re-surveying to check they are still present, as the records are quite old. Up until 2008 we only had eight People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) National Dormouse Box Monitoring Programme (NDMP) sites - compared to Kent's 70! We very much want to increase the number of sites in Sussex to help us learn more about our dormice.



Photo: Penny Green

New NDMP sites are limited by the cost of dormouse boxes and the need for trained, licensed dormouse workers. We currently only have a few licence holders in Sussex. To address this, we held two training courses this summer, at Mallydams and Wakehurst Place. In total 38 people attended to start their licence training. The prospective workers have now been paired up with licensed mentors, to enable them to build up the experience needed to obtain a licence.

In July, we held an event at SpringWatch in Stanmer Park, which gave people the chance to sponsor dormouse boxes for potential new NDMP sites. We have been able to provide three sites with 50 new boxes and still have more wood to cut and boxes to make to help set up even more sites!



Photo: Laurie Jackson

Starting in October we will be coordinating the Great Nut Hunt in Sussex, as part of the national hunt organised by PTES. In last year's hunt we surveyed 24 sites. Unfortunately less than half the sites where dormice had previously been recorded revealed recent evidence. We desperately need people to survey old and new sites to build up our knowledge of the current distribution of dormice in Sussex. The survey involves looking for hazel nut shells in woods that have been opened to determine what has eaten them.

If you are interested in helping with this winter's Great Nut Hunt then please contact us for a site list, survey information and recording sheets

sussexmammalsurveys@googlemail.com.

Summary of changes to Biodiversity Action Plan delivery in England

Laurie Jackson, Sussex Biodiversity Partnership

In late 2008 the England Biodiversity Group published a new framework for the conservation of priority habitats and species in England - *Securing Biodiversity*. It builds on the strengths of the Biodiversity Action Plan, including its target setting and partnership working, aiming to achieve biodiversity enhancements across whole landscapes and seascapes.

Pressures on our natural environment continue, and climate change further threatens the ability of many species to survive. We currently face losing essential natural products and services that support our everyday lives, such as medicines derived from plants and floodwater storage capacity.

The framework promotes landscape-scale conservation, restoration and creation. Working at this broader scale will enable us to protect the range of habitat types necessary to support species and conserve healthy, functioning ecosystems. Local and national specialists will be consulted on species needs. This will ensure specific requirements are recognised and integrated into habitat work, so making species well placed to move and adapt to the future effects of climate change.

Natural England has been appointed lead delivery body for the England Biodiversity Strategy and taking forward the new biodiversity framework for England.

The framework has four aspects:

Strategy Implementation Groups - Eleven groups responsible for progressing and developing policy in areas such as education, business and climate change for the delivery of the England Biodiversity Strategy.

Biodiversity Integration Groups - Nine groups responsible for working with regional and local biodiversity partnerships to ensure that habitat is delivered in the right places with the right characteristics to support species present. The groups will also identify priority projects and resources to implement conservation work.

Targeted Species Recovery - Not all species actions can be carried out through integration into habitat-based work. In these cases Natural England will work with partners to deliver agreed work.

Regional and Local Delivery - Biodiversity is ultimately lost or conserved at a local level. Strong local and regional biodiversity partnerships are a crucial element in achieving this framework, and there will be closer working to ensure synergy of national and local expertise.

Securing Biodiversity can be downloaded from the Natural England website <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>

News

Balanced Seas Marine Conservation Zone Project Launched Balanced Seas is here to help protect our seas in the South East and support sea users and interest groups to recommend Marine Conservation Zones to Government. Marine Conservation Zones will be created under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill that is currently going through

Parliament. These zones will protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. <http://www.balancedseas.org/>

Short-haired Bumblebee release at Dungeness A partnership between the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Hymettus, Natural England and the RSPB is working to reintroduce the Short-haired Bumblebee *Bombus subterraneus*. The bee is now extinct in the UK and Dungeness is one of its last known sites. It is hoped the first bees will be released to the wild during summer 2010.

http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org.uk/subt_project.html

Funding Deadlines

- Sussex Community Foundation Grant (grants up to £5000) **30 October 2009.**
- British Ecological Society Small Ecological Project Grant (grants up to £2500) **1 November 2009.**
- SITA Enriching Nature Programme (grants up to £175000) **4 November 2009.**
- Sussex Community Foundation Grassroots Grant (grants of £250 - £5000) **19 November 2009.**
- PTES UK Mammals Grants (grants of £250 - £30000) **23 November 2009.**
- PTES Worldwide Grants (grants of £500 - £10000) **30 November 2009.**
- SITA Small Grants Scheme (grants of £250 - £5000) **10 December 2009.**
- Secret Millionaire Fund (grants of £300 - £10000) **21 December 2009.**
- Ecominds (medium bids of £20001 - £60000) **8 January 2010.**
- Cemex Community Fund (grants of £1000 - £15000) **25 January 2010.**
- Great Crested Newt Conservation Grant Scheme (grants up to £500) **29 January 2010.**

Look out for

- **Natural England report on ecosystems services *No Charge? Valuing the Natural Environment*** http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/nochargev2_tcm6-14259.pdf
- **UK Climate Projections 2009** <http://ukcp09.defra.gov.uk/>
- **Buglife handbook for the aggregates industry.** <http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Documents/Managing%20Aggregates%20Sites%20for%20Invertebrates.pdf>
- **Defra report on a 2009 survey of public attitudes and behaviours towards the environment** <http://www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/statistics/environment/pubatt/download/report-attitudes-behaviours2009.pdf>

Upcoming Events

September 18-December 2: Business Link are running a series of free and interactive workshops to land based businesses throughout the South East, to help them make greater use of sustainable resources and are up-to-date with market developments.

<http://www.eventskent.co.uk/default.aspx?tabid=681>

October 16-November 20: Birkbeck Institute of Environment, University of London hold their latest series of free ecology and conservation studies lectures. The lectures focus on taxonomy. <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/environment/news/lectures>

November 2-6: UK Climate Projections in Practice Week is a series of events aimed at providing information on assessing the risk climate change presents to businesses and organisations. <http://bookwhen.com/southeastprojectionsinpractice>

November 3: The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership conference - Delivering biodiversity through open minds and grand designs. Contact Laurie using the details below for further information.

November 10-12: The IEEM annual conference takes place in Suffolk, its theme is Protected Areas: Past, Present and Prospects. <http://www.ieem.net/ieemautumnconference2009.asp>

November 17: Making it Safe, a conference examining how to successfully tackle crime and antisocial behaviour is held at the Royal Geographical Society in London. <http://www.green-space.org.uk/events/GS/latestconference.php>

November 19-20: The Botanical Gardens Education Network hold their annual conference, Weathering the Storm - Practical Ways to Communicate Climate Change at Ness Botanic Gardens. <http://bgen.org.uk/>

November 21: South East region amphibian and reptile groups' annual conference is held at Twyford, Berkshire. <http://www.arg-uk.org.uk/Downloads/ARGSEConference2009.pdf>

December 6: Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and the British Herpetological Society hold a joint scientific meeting on amphibian and reptile biology and conservation in Bournemouth. http://www.thebhs.org/Documents/main_documents/meetings/ARC-BHS%202009%20Sci%20Meeting%20Flyer.pdf

March 2: SDUK 2010 Conference - Transition to a Low Carbon Economy, is held at the Royal College of Physicians, London. <http://www.govnet.co.uk/sduk/index.html>

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 11 December 2009.

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