



MID DERBYSHIRE *LOCAL*
BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

October 1997 - December 1998



The Mid Derbyshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan is supported by a partnership of over 50 organisations, including local authorities, government agencies, business and voluntary conservation organisations. It forms part of the Derbyshire local Agenda 21 programme. The partnership of organisations aim, through the Plan, to conserve and enhance our local wildlife.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

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implementation of the L BAP

Many Thanks

to all the Partners who provided information for this First Annual Report

Derby City Council
Derbyshire County Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
North East Derbyshire District Council
Amber Valley Borough Council
Erewash Borough Council
South Derbyshire District Council
The Three Valleys Project
Derbyshire Biological Records Centre
Forest Enterprise
Environment Agency
The National Forest
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Derbyshire Ornithological Society
Derby Natural History Society
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
Country Landowners Association

Annual Reports of Working Groups

The membership, chairs and secretariat of all the working groups are set out in Appendix A

Report of Technical Working Group

The Technical Working Group has met six times since April 1998, addressing several principal issues and producing drafts of a number of documents which will help to provide for Partners detailed interpretation of the HAP and SAP targets.

- **Regional Biodiversity Forum**
The Forum was established in May 1998. Representation on this important group has been maintained. Primary issues include liaison between Local BAP groups, influencing the Regional Development Agency, Regional Chamber/Assembly and Regional Development Plan and consideration of national, regional and local monitoring needs.
- **Habitat subgroups for Farmland & Grassland, Woodland and Wetland**
Have been established and their initial recommendations for action and priorities have been considered.
- **Summaries of Targets & Timescales**
Have been prepared to assist all Partners in identifying their potential contributions to targets.
- **Habitat and Species priorities within each Natural Area**
Priorities have been identified to assist local authorities and other Partners to focus efforts for protection and enhancement. These are now ready for consultation stage.
- **Guidance on contributing to Biodiversity targets through the planning system** This was identified as needed by the Planning subgroup. It provided the catalyst for work on identifying priorities within each Natural Area. Draft guidance is in preparation for discussion with planning authorities.
- **Guidance on habitat creation and enhancement.**
The need for agreed lists of native species for use in habitat creation schemes was identified as a priority by each habitat subgroup. It is now at the draft stage for consultation with the subgroups and other interested Partners.
- **Establishing efficient and sustainable recording and monitoring .** The implications of the National Biodiversity Network, including options for the future development of the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre, have been the first consideration, in order to ensure that records will be available against which to monitor progress against targets. The Group are now moving on to consider monitoring systems in more detail.
- **UK BAP work and guidance materials.** This has included further tranches of HAPs and SAPs and initial consideration of national monitoring for a UK Millennium Biodiversity

Report. Much of this information has yet to be assimilated.

- **Liaison with Local Agenda 21 Action throughout the county, promotion and publicity**
Initial consideration has been given to these issues and contact has been maintained with LA21 officers.

Conclusions

A considerable amount of progress has been made, despite a lack of any additional resources within the Partner organisations. Much of the work initiated in the last year will be finalised in the next few months. Documents will then be available for the whole Partnership and a wider circulation. The production of user friendly documents interpreting the Local BAP is recognised as a priority. Longer preparation time to ensure that documents conform to this need is considered acceptable.

Priorities for 1999-2000 :

- **Finalise *Habitat and Species Priorities within each Natural Area*** following consultation and identify opportunities for presenting and distributing the priorities in user friendly formats.
- **Finalise *Guidance on Biodiversity targets and the Planning system*** and its presentation in a user friendly manner for planners and developers, following consultation, together with its consideration in conjunction with progress on the Structure Plan Review, including biodiversity policies.
- **Finalise *Guidance on Habitat Creation and Enhancement***, following consultation.
- **Encourage the many existing countryside, landscape and nature conservation projects to more clearly address biodiversity targets through refining their objectives.**
- **Develop monitoring systems** to allow assessment of progress towards local and national BAP targets for individual projects, the Local BAP, Local Agenda 21 sustainability indicators, Regional Biodiversity Forum, and UK BAP. Also to enable grant aid bodies to more clearly judge the contributions of individual projects.
- **Introduce BAP issues and targets to specialist audiences of advisers, land agents, land owners etc.** through events.
- **Identify possible projects to attract grant aid from English Nature's Action on Biodiversity budget** for 2000/2001 and beyond.
- **Organise a major event in autumn 2000** to review and publicise progress and refocus efforts.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Steering Group supports:

1. the identified priorities to guide the work of the Technical Working in 1999/2000;
2. the organisation of a major event in autumn 2000.

Report of Habitat Subgroups

Introduction

Each subgroup is currently programmed to meet twice a year. In the first year the secretariat and Chairmanship of the subgroups has been informal.

During their meetings in the past year all the subgroups identified the following major issues:

- co-ordination of advice and training for advisers and agents in the field;
- availability of species lists to guide habitat creation and enhancement;
- awareness raising of national and local BAP targets.

All these have been passed to the Technical Working Group for further consideration and action.

Grassland and Farmland Habitat Subgroup

The Subgroup has met twice since April 1998, addressing several principal issues.

- Grassland surveys;
- Targeting of Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS);
- Delivery mechanisms for taking small areas of grassland into management and bulking up seed sources.

Priorities for the next year:

- Review role and organisation.
- completion of grassland surveys and consideration of results and implications for targets for action;
- Further refinement of CSS targeting;
- Establishment of three year grassland management project funded initially by English Nature.
- Consider monitoring needs.

Woodland Habitat Subgroup

The has met twice since April 1998, addressing several issues.

- Surveys of ancient and semi-natural woodlands under 2 ha.
- Implications of Forestry Commission grant aid and guidance;
- Establishment of demonstration woodlands of various types to provide opportunities for woodland and other land owners to see examples of good practice.

Priorities for the next year:

- Review role and organisation;
- Identify and establish demonstration woodlands and ensure knowledge of these;
- Provide a forum for consideration of FC grant aid and guidance in relation to achievement of BAP targets, possibly opening the subgroup to a wider audience.
- Consider monitoring needs.

Wetland Habitat Subgroup

The subgroup had its inaugural meeting in January 1999. The many current projects with an impact on wetland habitats and species were reviewed. It was agreed that many targets could be delivered through these channels. Projects should be encouraged to define their objectives in relation to BAP targets.

Priorities for the next year:

- Review role and organisation;
- Liaise with current projects re BAP targets;
- Consider wetland seminar including wet woodland;
- Wet grassland and relationship with priority species;
- Otters and Rivers Project;
- Consider monitoring needs.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that each subgroup now reviews its role and objectives and considers how best to organise itself to achieve these, possibly with a lead partner to organise and support activity.

Report on Derbyshire Biodiversity Network

The establishment of the *Derbyshire Biodiversity Network (DBN)* is a response to the monitoring and recording needs which the three Local BAPs for Mid Derbyshire, Peak District and National Forest, would impose, together with the implications for Derbyshire of the creation of the *National Biodiversity Network (NBN)*.

A Steering Group, supported by several Local BAP partners*, was established in 1998 to prepare a DBN draft development plan for consultation in summer 1999. The Steering Group of the DBN liaise closely with the Technical Working Group and the successful establishment of the DBN is seen as a priority for the success of the Local BAP.**Derby City Biological Records Centre, English Nature, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Peak Park Authority, Derbyshire County Council*

The aim is to secure long term resources for species recording undertaken by the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre and additional resources for survey work and maintaining of records for habitats, such as the Derbyshire Wildlife Sites Register. Involvement in the DBN of voluntary organisations and individuals who undertake a considerable amount of surveying and provide many of the records which will be required for monitoring BAP targets is seen as vital.

Introduction

Planning subgroup

This group has not met this year.

Priorities for the next year:

- The subgroup will meet again following the distribution of the draft '*Guidance on Biodiversity targets and the Planning system*' to assess the guidance.
- The Guidance will then be finalised, taking into account any related progress on the Structure Plan Review, including biodiversity policies;
- Consider monitoring needs.

Promotions subgroup

This group has met once this year. A representative met with the Local Agenda 21 officers to discuss possibilities of joint working in this area. No particular opportunities were identified which could be taken forward with the current resources.

Partners were asked to report their activities between October 1997 and December 1998. This report includes a summary of all reported activities which are new work or provide an interesting or innovative approach to contributing to BAP targets. It is not exhaustive, though most reports have been mentioned in some form.

The intention is to provide Partners with an indication of the scope of work and ideas which might prove useful in considering their own future contributions to BAP targets. The Report indicates the wide variety of action which does contribute.

The contribution which local action makes towards local, regional and national BAP targets, and how to monitor this, will be a priority for the Technical Working Group in the forthcoming year. As a start in assisting Partners to provide annual reports which are clearly related to targets a summary '*Habitat Action Plans Target Summaries*' is now being distributed to clarify action and timescales. Partners will be contacted concerning monitoring possibilities in 1999.

It is recognised that contributions from Partners will vary with their resources. As one contributor commented,

Its the quality that counts!

For explanation of abbreviated names of Partners - see list of contributors.

Focus on Species

Birds

- **DOS Derbyshire Avifauna Project:** The five year breeding bird survey has been extended so that data will form part of a comprehensive avifauna of Derbyshire for the Millennium
- **DOS Record Computerisation for records.** Principles and policies decided, awaiting final choice of software, possible Recorder 2000. Will take account of National Biodiversity Network requirements.

Bluebells

- **DWT Bluebell survey**
Results of the 1997/8 survey are being analysed. A report will be produced Spring 1999.
- **DWT Otters and Rivers Project Officer** for key species of otter, water

Water Vole

- **DWT County wide survey of water voles.** Continued throughout 1998. A report will be produced in May 1999.
- **DBRC All water vole records** have been updated onto DBRC computers and maps/diagrams provided to the scheme organisers as required. Database of mink records not fully up-to-date, but will be soon.
- **Three Valleys Project Survey of Rother** and training of volunteers and staff.

Otter Species Action Plan

vole and crayfish plus advice and direct action on wetland habitat creation and

management.

- **DBRC Database** of known sightings has been maintained and new sightings updated. Records have been supplied to relevant organisations as appropriate.

Native Black Poplar Species Action Plan

- **Derby Natural History Society and DBRC** Undertaking survey of native black poplars. Designed a survey form and considered training needs to ensure that everyone can identify native black poplar correctly. Survey work will start this summer. Aim: to identify, photograph and map the exact location of all known or possible black poplar specimens in the County, and to maintain herbarium specimens from some or all of these at Derby Museum to allow assessment and monitoring. One landowner who is propagating stocks of black poplar has already been found. **Derby City Council** is willing to propagate other stocks, if required.

Crayfish

- **Three Valleys Project Crayfish project with EA** - monitor native population and remove non-natives .
- **DBRC Records** are currently being collated for this species, in discussion with Environment Agency.

Glow Worm

- **DBRC Database maintained.** Few new sites are being found. As yet only one site is being actively managed for this species. No progress in identifying other suitable sites.

Raptors and Owls

- **DCC Countryside Service North East Derbyshire Nest Box** project to increase numbers of suitable nesting sites.

Invasive non-native species

- **Three Valleys Project Himalayan balsam control** : Pilot project Sud Brook, Linacre area..

Derbyshire Biological Records Centre

Derbyshire Biological Records Centre (DBRC) continues to be involved in the BAP Technical Working Group. Last December DBRC reached the milestone of a quarter of a million computerised records. Over 50% of the county's Red Data Book plant records have now been computerised. Other RDB and BAP species are being computerised as resources permit.

A vast amount of recording and computerisation of plant data is currently being done for the Derbyshire Flora 2000 project to revise and update the 1969 Flora of Derbyshire. This has resulted in the discovery of several previously unrecorded species and rediscovery of others thought to have long since disappeared, some of which are BAP or RDB species. A number of species will probably be recommended for removal from the county RDB plant lists. All records of BAP species will be included where they are held and available from agencies such as EN and PNP.

Having faced threat of closure, DBRC now faces a more positive future, with its information services increasingly being used. Through the Derbyshire Biodiversity Network plans are being drawn up to create a biological recording network across the county, linked to the National Biodiversity Network. A financial contribution has already been received from English Nature to help support the current work of biological data processing. Offers of support have been made from one other district Authority, though not yet taken up.

12 key actions

- **SDDC Local Plan** adopted 1998. Contains policies for protection of wildlife. The DC are aware that these are not fully compatible with BAP priorities. Policies will be reviewed to more fully conform to BAP after the Derbyshire Structure Plan EIP.
- **NEDDC Local Plan** Incorporate the protection of habitats and species in statutory development plan. Now adopted.
- **Derby City Guidance for Developers** on nature conservation on development sites and on plants and shrubs of benefit to wildlife. Published in partnership with English Nature.
- **NEDDC Using local species in planting.** Free tree scheme; three WGS sites stocked with local species.

Habitat Action Plans

Woodlands

- **Chesterfield Borough Council EDWP** 1.6 ha native trees planted at three locations.
- **NEDDC designation of TPOs.** Halting the loss of ancient broad leaved woodland.
- **NEDDC Raise awareness** of value of woodland through partnership in EDWP, Free trees, promotional activities, Tree warden activities, internal liaison and tree warden events.
- **EBC Woodland Strategy.** Planted 12,500 trees .
- **BTCV Volunteer work** 781 days
- **DCC:** Beginning to consider active management of woodlands and establishment of overall management plan for woods in its ownership.
- **Three Valleys Project Frith** Wood Detailed botanical survey completed and draft management plan.
- **Three Valleys Project Linacre Reservoirs Input to woodland**
- **DWT Grassland surveys** Surveys of all semi-natural

management plan.

- **Derby City Creation of woodland areas** in River Derwent corridor

Ancient and semi-natural woodland

- **AVBC EDWP** Promoting grants, providing advice, targeting advice on key areas for regeneration and linkages.
- **Forest Enterprise Shining Cliff** Implementing SSSI management plan, controlling invasive species
- **DWT Survey of ancient woodlands under 2 ha.** Long term volunteer identified. assist with

Wet woodland

- **AVBC Hammersmith Meadows** managed as a grassland site, Candidate Wildlife Site.

Grasslands

grasslands, essential baseline work against which to judge all other creation

or enhancement, is progressing but lack of resources has severely limited progress.

- **BTCV Volunteer work** 121 days
- **Three Valleys Project: Phase 1 grassland survey** of most of project area. funded by Renishaw Environmental Action Group.
- **Three Valleys Project Countryside Stewardship (CSS)** Assisted private land owner to take advantage of CSS.
- **Derby City Changes to mowing and maintenance regimes** in City's parks
- **AVBC Hammersmith Meadows** Intend to ensure positive management through CSS.
- **DCC CSS** for Kirk Hallam Meadows and Pewitt Carr Local Nature Reserve, Blue Bank Pools Grasslands at Chesterfield.

Calcareous Grassland

- **DCC CSS** for five small magnesian limestone sites at Pleasley, including part of Rowthorne Trail LNR..
- **DCC Start major reinstatement of magnesian limestone** grassland at Pleasley.
- **Three Valleys Frith Wood Field** Botanical survey and management reinstated.
- **Three Valleys Sorby Natural HS** invited to undertake invertebrate field meeting in the Whittington area, including Brearley Park.

Farmland

- **BTCV Volunteer work** 109 days

Hedgerows

- **AVBC Promoted CSS** at Hammersmith Meadows.
- **DCC Draft Strategy for Management of Water Areas.** Prepared, including the establishment of biodiversity targets. To be finalised in

- **AVBC Continue to promote and advise** on management through the Council.
- **Three Valleys Project Work with CPRE on reinstating** hedgerow on Summerley farm.
- **Three Valleys Project Hedge laying competition** at Norton Ploughing Match. Annual funding
- **NEDDC Survey all hedgerows** in district to see how many fall within the Hedgerow Regulations.

Wetlands

- **BTCV Volunteer days** 194
- **EBC Erewash Wetland Project** Designed and
- **DWT Erewash Meadows Nature Reserve** New wetland areas created, will include scrapes, marsh and wet grassland in an intimate mosaic.
- **DWT Carr Vale Nature Reserve** New wetland
- **DWT Otters and Rivers project officer.** Advice and direct action on wetland habitat creation and management.
- **Derby City Creation of Wetland Areas** in POS in Mickleover.
- **NEDDC Implementation of EA conditions** on planning permissions for protection of water courses.

Rivers and streams

- **AVBC Responded to LEAPs** for Derwent, Lower Trent and Erewash .

Lakes, Ponds and canal

- **DCC Pleasley Reclamation scheme** Extensive development of open water for waders and ground nesters. Incorporates dragonfly ponds. 1999.
- **EBC: Erewash Ponds Project** Completed. Funded creation of 4 ponds and restoration of 2.

Reedbeds

- *AVBC Smotherfly Wildlife Conservation Management* Steer Group Involvement in restoration.
- *DCC Bolsover South Tip* Development of new 1ha reed bed.

Swamp/fen/mire

- *Forest Enterprise Whitwell Wood Ginny Spring SSSI* Implementing SSSI management plan to enhance habitats for rare plant species.

Wet grassland

- *CBC Brearley Park Wetland* 10 ha. Surveyed and identified as a Wildlife Site Many notable species. Habitat action plan drawn up, application for CSS planned and LNR designation. Assisted by Three Valleys Project
- *DCC CSS Whistling Meadow at Holmewood*

Heathland

- *BTCV Volunteer work* 118 days

Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland

- *AVBC Penny Town Ponds* Active management, community involvement, Lottery funding, LNR designation considered.
- *AVBC Kedleston Park* Guided National Trust in

management works on SSSI, Wildlife Sites and Conservation Area.

Roadside Verges

- *AVBC Targeted specific management* regime at Sledgegate Lane, Lea..
- *DCC initial consideration of roadside verge* management project.

Scrub

- *Three Valleys Project: Survey and management of areas* in and around Frith Wood to benefit grasshopper warbler and nesting bullfinch.

Urban

- *BTCV Volunteer days* 127
- *AVBC Local Plan Issues and Options Report.* Looking at positive uses for land on urban fringe, including woodland planting, to enhance quality of landscape and help resist urban pressure. Identify and protect wildlife corridors and promote their effective management including through planning conditions and legal agreements in conjunction with new development.
- *Three Valleys Project & DCC Seldom Seen Engine House at Eckington.* Restoration to include raptor boxes and bat bricks and boxes.

Projects with several HAPs:

- **CBC** *Holmebrook Valley* 20ha. Unimproved grass, woodland, scrub, marsh. Found to contain BAP species. Habitat action plan being pursued.
- **CBC** *Pools Brook Country Park Nature Reserve* 14 ha. Many habitats including unimproved grassland, willow carr/marsh, wetland, woodland and open water. Capital improvements to secure management started. LNR designation planned.
- **DWT** *Wildlife Sites Officer* Working principally in four LA areas but also carrying out work for DCC and EA. , including resurveying Wildlife Sites, providing advice on management, assessing potential development sites with LAs, carrying out further grassland surveys to identify possible Wildlife Sites.
- **DWT Reserves:** *Improved management and recording* as a result of more staff and HLF funding.
- **Derby City** *West Park Meadows* Pond enhancement and management of 2.5 ha of grassland. LNR declared November 1998.
- **AVBC** *Living Churchyard Project* Considering Belper Cemetery.

BTCV Statement on Biodiversity: Emphasises the role which the community and volunteers can play and the need to ensure that BAPs are designed and worded to be understandable and encourage action by communities.

National Forest supplied information. Falls outside BAP area but information helpful for comparison.

Environment Agency Formulation of Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) for Derwent, Trent and Erewash incorporating objectives specifically relating to BAP species and habitats, including otters, water voles, bats, crayfish, birds, Brook lamprey, wetlands, wet woodlands, wet grasslands.