



# **Progress Report October – February 2008**

**By Debbie Court  
Biodiversity Project Officer**

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008**

## **1. Linkages to national and local BAPs.**

### **1.1 UK BAP.**

Copies of the annual report and newsletters were passed to UK BAP officer. Responses were made to various questionnaires from the UK Biodiversity Partnership.

### **1.2 Regional**

The Project Officer has attended a number of regional meetings within the period including East Midlands Biodiversity Full Partnership and the Steering Group as the chair the regional LBAP officers group. The regional LBAPs met in December to discuss common issues such as the Natural England Memorandum of Agreement and the promotion of the NERC Biodiversity Duty.

The Project Officer attended, and helped out at, the Regional Biodiversity Partnership conference on 26th February.

### **1.3 Links with neighbouring LBAPs**

Close contact and liaison has been maintained with the Peak District and National Forest LBAPs as well as Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire LBAPs.

### **1.4 Greenprints**

The Project Officer attended one Chesterfield Greenprint Steering Group meeting in December providing guidance and a holistic county-wide overview and a steer for 2008 activities so they compliment county-wide projects.

The Bolsover Biodiversity Network (BBN) has continued to be successful with key partners and groups working towards the targets. A number of small-scale project have received funding through the £10,000 funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. The Project Officer gave a ten minute presentation on the Bolsover Greenprint to the Bolsover Countryside Partnership's AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

The North-East Derbyshire Greenprint has been through its final draft and the Project Officer worked with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and North East Derbyshire District Council to run an awareness raising workshop for NEDDC officers to encourage the various departments to sign up the Greenprint actions.

## **2. Local Feedback**

### **2.1 Annual Forum**

The joint Lowland Derbyshire and Peak District LBAP Annual Forum entitled *Sustainable Wetland Habitats and Communities for the Future* was held on 11<sup>th</sup> October. The day was very well attended with over 100 delegates. The event was very well received by delegates with the mixture of talks and workshops given by both LBAP partners and national experts proving particularly popular. All of the talks and write ups from the workshops have been uploaded to the website.

Planning for the 2008 is now taking place with discussions over a joint two day event with the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group. This is likely to have a Friday (aimed at LBAP partners) followed by a Saturday event (aimed at Local Groups and volunteers) , one in Derbyshire and one in Nottinghamshire with invitations extended to both partnerships. Dates and themes are still to be confirmed.

## 2.2 LBAP Steering Group

The Steering Group of the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership met on 24<sup>th</sup> January. Ten members of the partnership were represented and participated in discussions. The main issues included bringing both the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership and the Local Records Centre Partnership under the LBAP partnership.

## 2.3 Servicing and expanding the partnership.

At the September LBAP Exec it was agreed to provide Local Groups and smaller organisations with the opportunity to formally join the LBAP Partnership. A letter with a tear-off slip was sent to the Local Groups with the October newsletter mailing.

To date the following groups have joined the LBAP Partnership:

- Darley and Nutwood Nature Reserve Management Group
- Derby Pond Wardens Association
- Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group
- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society
- Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group
- The Dove Valley Community Project
- Dronfield and District Natural History Society
- Environmental Education Project
- Friends of Belper Parks
- Friends of Forbes Hole
- Lea Brook Valley Project
- Moss Valley Wildlife Group
- Pleasley Pit Nature Study Group
- RSPB Chesterfield Local Group
- Sorby Breck Ringing Group

During the last six months the Project Officer has visited a number of LBAP partners and local groups to discuss various issues including projects current and future, BARS and funding. LBAP Partners and groups visited include BTCV, British Waterways, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Dove Valley Project, Lea Valley Project, Highways Agency, FWAG, Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire, Severn Trent Water and the Friends of Forbes Hole.

## 3. Making the LBAP accessible.

### 3.1 Website

The usage of the Derbyshire Biodiversity website has remained high. The package shows a very high usage following the Annual Forum which also coincided with the release of the October newsletter. The local group page is still the most visited part of the website, followed by the new species and habitats pages.

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Average No of visits per day	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Feb 2008	1210	1721	59.34	4471	29921	669.45MB
Jan 2008	1236	2000	64.51	5246	47251	1.27GB
Dec 2007	1025	1312	42.32	5913	36664	509.24MB
Nov 2007	1266	1730	57.66	5043	40004	642.09MB
Oct 2007	1406	2144	69.16	6414	66491	1.47GB
Sept 2007	1288	2985	99.5	2985	32650	440.65MB
Aug 2007	826	1227	39.58	3243	32020	790.62MB
July 2007	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available

June 2007	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
May 2007	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
April 2007	888	1088	36.26	3532	48064	334.12MB
March 2007	978	1494	48.19	4473	41352	472.69MB
Feb 2007	910	1414	50.50	3079	28246	456.38 MB
Jan 2007	857	1339	43.19	2606	22152	573.23 MB
Dec 2006	747	1437	46.35	2701	18765	346.16 MB
Nov 2006	717	1582	41.55	3452	39852	597.94 MB
Oct 2006	703	1204	38.83	2510	20997	323.53 MB

The website has been visited by people from over 35 different countries.

### 3.2. Newsletter

Quarterly newsletters were produced and distributed in October and January. The next newsletter is due out in April. Contributions have continued to come in from LBAP partners as well and local community groups. Feedback from LBAP partners and local groups has been very favourable.

### 3.3 Talks

The Project Officer gave a talk about the LBAP Partnership to the Friends of Markeaton Brook on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

### 3.4 Annual Report

The 2006/7 Annual Report was produced in October in time for the Annual Forum. The report detailed LBAP contributions made from over 60 organisations and provided an update on progress towards the LBAP targets. Copies of the Annual Report were distributed to LBAP partners, local groups and distributed at various events and workshops for information and an electronic version was placed on the website.

## 4. Implement Habitat Action Plans

### 4.1 Woodland

The Woodland Group met in Bakewell on 18<sup>th</sup> February. The two main items for further discussion included the 2008 woodland seminar and a specific project to look at the habitats, especially ancient woodlands, within the Derwent Valley.

### 4.2 Grassland

The Grassland Group met on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007. Progress has continued to be made by both the *Value in Meadows* and *Wild About Nature* projects. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has been in discussion with Natural England regarding potential sites suitable for HLS. The Bolsover SITA Landfill tax bid for £25k was successful and will help restore species-poor grasslands within the Bolsover area.

A further £10,000 has been secured for road verge reserves through the Local Transport Plan. Discussions have continued on the management prescriptions for the individual sites.

### 4.3 Wetland

The Wetland HAP group met on 27<sup>th</sup> September. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Water for Wildlife Project gained additional financial support from Tubney Charitable Trust and SITA landfill tax for wetland creation and advice to landowners.

#### **4.4 Farmland**

The Farmland Group has not met in the last 6 months but further progress has been made with surveying hedgerows in Chesterfield. The Project Officer has been involved in an application to DEFRA for funding for hedgerow surveys within the Moss Valley area.

#### **5. Implement Species Action Plans**

Following the publication of the revised UK priority species the Project Officer has liaised with county recorders to compile a revised list for the LBAP area. The list of UK priority BAP species recently recorded in the LBAP area is 123 species including nearly 60 species of moth. This list has been sent to the East Midlands Biodiversity Co-ordinator for inclusion within the East Midlands priority species list.

The Riparian Species Group (water vole, otter, crayfish and various fish species) has not met during the last 6 months but it is due to meet on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **6. Increasing capacity of partners in key sectors to implement HAPs and SAPs.**

##### **6.1 BAP Audits**

Following the completion of the biodiversity audit for the Derbyshire Countryside Service the Project Officer has had a meeting with Countryside Service managers to try and take forward some of the recommendations. A copy of the audit was sent to both the Forestry Commission and Natural England for their consideration of a HLS and EWGS application for sites with the Countryside Service estate.

A Biodiversity Management Plan has been completed for Crich Quarry. This was a small contract for Aggregates Industries. The report detailed the BAP habitats on site and the contributions the management of the site could make towards LBAP targets whilst complying with their existing planning conditions.

The Project Officer has been in discussions with Severn Trent Water staff about carrying out a biodiversity audit on both Foremark and Staunton Harold Reservoirs allowing STW staff to be able to calculate their contributions towards LBAP targets.

#### **7 Monitoring and Reporting.**

##### **7.1 BARS**

Following the production of the Annual Report the information from LBAP partners was put on BARS by the Project Officer. The Project Officer has met with three LBAP partners (BTCV, Highways Agency and British Waterways) to agree the actions they will report on BARS and provided individual training on BARS.

Work has been ongoing to agree a small number of actions for LBAP species, mainly associated with recording and monitoring, that can be put on BARS without the need for a full Species Action Plan. Draft actions have been prepared for amphibian and reptile species and these have been sent to the Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile group for their comments.

#### **8. Community Strategies, Development Plans and similar strategic partnerships.**

##### **8.1 Local Strategic Partnerships & Local Area Agreements**

The Project Officer attended a national workshop to discuss the detail of the national biodiversity indicator NI197. A progress report was provided and presented by the Project

Officer to the LAA Sustainable Communities Board on 20<sup>th</sup> November. A subsequent quarterly report was provided in January on the biodiversity LAA indicator.

The inclusion of the NI Biodiversity Indicator in the Community Strategy has been discussed at both the Bolsover and South Derbyshire LSPs and is likely to be included as one of the local targets.

## **8.2 Planning documents and other consultations**

During the last six months the Project Officer attended a workshop to discuss the environmental issues for the Core Strategy for Derbyshire Dales DC, a workshop on Green Infrastructure and a consultation workshop to look at the biodiversity information associated with HLS targetting.

## **8.3 Training for LBAP Partners**

The Project Officer has worked with the Sustainability Officer at North East Derbyshire Work on a Biodiversity Strategy for NEDDC. This culminated in a workshop for senior Council officers on 8<sup>th</sup> February run in conjunction with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

## **9. Raise Funding for LBAP initiatives**

### **9.1 Funding information.**

Information has been circulated to LBAP partners on new funding schemes with the appropriate deadlines and criteria. The Delivery Plan highlighted the gaps in delivery and suggested three specific delivery projects which require funding.

A meeting was held in Bakewell on 22<sup>nd</sup> November to discuss current funding opportunities and specific funding projects that LBAP partners were seeking funding for.

### **9.2 Support of Funding bids**

The Project Officer has continued to discuss funding for biodiversity projects with LBAP partners. Following the success of Derbyshire County Council's Heathland and Grassland applications the Project Officer has been working with various LBAP partners on funding bids for specific biodiversity projects, including work for lapwing and water voles at Carsington Water, wetland work at Forbes Hole LNR, monitoring farmland species in Bolsover and hedgerow surveys for the Moss Valley. Support letters have been written and sent to accompany five LBAP grant applications.

### **9.3 Funding for co-ordination**

Natural England's Memorandum of Agreement for 2008-11 has been discussed with Natural England staff and a draft action plan drawn up. All Local Authorities, and some LBAP partners, have been asked to contribute towards the Project Officers post in 2008/9. To date all have responded positively saying that they have requested money within budget allocations for the 2008/9.

In addition to those contributions listed in the last progress report North East Derbyshire has been able to make a contribution and money has been secured from the National Forest Company for a digitising contract (£2,500). A further £1,300 has been secured from the Environment Agency to survey for white-clawed crayfish within the River Rother catchment.

The Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) has confirmed that two biodiversity related courses will be in their 2008/9 professional development programme,

both run by the Project officer. If both of these fully book up this could raise an additional £1,000 for the LBAP partnership.

#### **10. NERC Biodiversity Duty**

The Project Officer has been involved in regional discussions regarding the best way to disseminate information on the NERC biodiversity duty. As part of the regional seminars the Project Officer gave a presentation using case studies at the Derbyshire breakfast seminar.

Following the production of a report reviewing North East Derbyshire District Council's services under NERC discussions have taken place with other local authorities. An audit has been completed for Derbyshire County Council's Environmental Services Dept and for the Derbyshire Police Constabulary. The Project Officer has discussed the duty with a number of other organisations including and a couple of parish councils and presented information at several Local Strategic Partnership meetings.