

Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan

FINAL Progress Report for 2011-2017: 3rd Tranche of 9 Plans

IN 2017 WE REPORTED ON 9 ACTION PLANS ASSOCIATED WITH MOSAIC HABITATS:

CALCAREOUS GRASSLAND **OPEN MOSAIC HABITATS** **QUARRIES & GRAVEL PITS**

DOTTED BEE-FLY **BLOODY NOSED BEETLE** **CHALK CARPET MOTH** **ADDER** **SMALL BLUE BUTTERFLY** **CUCKOO BEE**

IN 2018 WE WILL BE REPORTING ON 9 PLANS ASSOCIATED WITH WETLAND

OUR ACTION FOR THE **SMALL BLUE BUTTERFLY**

Work to restore the small blue began in 2008 with the 'Bringing Back the Small Blues' project run by **Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire (BCW)** and funded by SITA (now Suez Communities) Trust.

Nine years later all our objectives for this butterfly have been achieved by BCW. Population size and range have both been maintained and increased and all known sites are monitored annually.



Photo of small blues mating by Mike Slater

45 small blue sites are now managed by BCW, of which over half have breeding colonies; seven of these sites have been designated as **Local Wildlife Sites**. The number of permanent colonies has risen from 6 in 2012 to 23 in 2017, exceeding the target of 20 set in 2015 by BCW.

Since 2011, BCW has increased the number of sites suitable for colonisation from 6 to 38, again exceeding its target.

OUR ACTION FOR **CALCAREOUS GRASSLAND**

Our target for the restoration of degraded calcareous grassland has been exceeded by the work of several organisations at many sites including roadside verges and cuttings.

Photo of anthills at Harbury North by Mike Slater

We hope that our target for expansion of this habitat will soon be met by the efforts of **BCW** which works in partnership with **CEMEX** at many quarry sites.



The identification of further sites with the potential for restoration and expansion is underway by the **Habitat Biodiversity Audit** partnership and **BCW**.

At a landscape scale, **Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT)** is supporting the management of grassland along some roadside verges to enhance habitat connectivity.

OUR ACTION FOR **QUARRIES & GRAVEL PITS**

In Warwickshire at least 200 insect species are wholly or largely dependent upon quarries and gravel pits.

Since 2011 restoration for quality wildlife habitat has taken place at 15 worked out quarries, exceeding our target of five.

Heathland has been replanted, wetland and reedbed created. Conditions have been improved for species dependent on quarrying such as sand martin and little ringed plover, grizzled and dingy skipper butterflies, and chalk carpet and shaded pug moths.

The Southam Quarry extension will provide more quality wildlife habitat in the future.



Photo by Mike Slater

GOOD NEWS for the **DOTTED BEE-FLY** and **BLOODY NOSED BEETLE**

Photo by Steven Falk



The **dotted bee-fly** is now fairly frequent in south Warwickshire and not at all endangered, according to the County Recorder, Steven Falk. A species of old quarries, its increase is due to the natural increase and spread of its two main mining bee hosts, *Andrena cineraria* and *A. flavipes*. The action to undertake management of its known sites is now probably unnecessary.

Research by Richard Brown in 2015 found the **bloody nosed beetle** to be more widely spread across the Lawford Heath area than previously observed, with new populations within the hedgerow network which extends out from Lawford Heath to the disused railway line west of Rugby. During scrub clearance along the cycle path in 2017 Sustrans and the Cawston Greenway Group found beetles at 5 sites. Near Thurleston we have records since 2013.

Photo by Paul Hart



SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES FOR ACTION 2018-2020. We are still gathering information from our partners on progress with 9 action plans. There are key plans and actions which are priorities, with need for further action:

- ❖ **Calcareous grassland:** whilst good progress has been made with some existing sites, the overall area of this type of grassland is extremely small, so still a vulnerable and threatened habitat. Expansion requires suitable substrate and definite action to achieve our target.
- ❖ **Chalk carpet moth:** in conjunction with grassland actions, there is a need for connecting the four existing colonies across the landscape to support populations and enable expansion. Extra targeted monitoring is needed to establish true status.
- ❖ **Quarries & gravel pits:** despite fulfilling our target for restoration, there are many more quarries being restored solely to agriculture with limited /no long-term biodiversity gain, or are under threat from succession and development pressure. Many species are dependent on the disturbed and open ground provided by this habitat to fulfil their life cycles.

- the **LAPWING** and **SNIPE** plans will be combined to protect **all our scarce waders**, including redshank and curlew.
- ALSO** • the **FISH** action plan will be progressed in conjunction with the **Rivers & Streams** plan.
- action plans will be written for **REPTILES** - grass snake, slow worm and common lizard – and the **COMMON TOAD**.

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Our 52 Local Biodiversity Action Plans provide a local response to the UK Government's National Action Plans for threatened habitats and species. A county-wide network of over 100 partners, all active in nature conservation, is consulted on these plans and their measurable targets. The partnership works to fulfil the agreed priorities. Most of the plans were originally written from 2002-5 and progress first reported on in 2007-8. They were fully revised from 2011-15 and a second reporting programme of tranches of plans is underway, to be completed by 2020.



ACTION PLAN	STATUS 2008-2010	WE ARE REPORTING ON THE FOLLOWING KEY ACTIONS IN 9 OF OUR BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS: Key to status: ↑ Good progress ↑ Some progress ↔ No change ↓ Decline	STATUS 2011-2017	
			ACTION	PLAN
CALCAREOUS GRASSLAND	↑ = any progress	Continue to select all qualifying lowland calcareous grassland sites as Local Wildlife Sites . 11 sites	↑	↑
		Ensure that the protection of all calcareous grassland is included in Local Development Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and any other relevant strategies. 4+ out of 7 Local Plans	↑	
		Ensure that new minor or major developments result in net biodiversity gain through adherence to the mitigation hierarchy. No net loss	↑	
		Achieve favourable condition of 17ha of existing calcareous grassland by 2015, a further 18ha by 2020 and a further 18ha by 2026 by appropriate management. Target exceeded (30ha)	↑↑	
		Continue restoration of degraded calcareous grassland at the five SSSIs and other sites, restoring at least 8 ha by 2015 and a further 19ha by 2026. Target exceeded (42ha)	↑↑	
		Expand the area of calcareous grassland on calcareous ground/ quarry restoration by 5ha by 2015 and a further 11ha by 2026. 0.14ha	↑	
		Map digitally the remnant areas of unimproved / semi-improved calcareous grassland. 151ha recorded	↑	
		Work at a landscape scale, focusing effort on identified important clusters of calcareous grassland to maximise benefit. 2 roadside verges	↑	
		Identify sites for potential calcareous grassland restoration and expansion. 30-40 sites	↑	
CHALK CARPET MOTH	↑ = any progress	Designate all new chalk carpet sites that qualify as Local Wildlife Sites . No new sites	↔	↑
		Continue to work with landowners to ensure that the 4 sites with colonies have management plans which fulfil the habitat requirements of the chalk carpet. 4 plans	↑	
		Manage suitable areas of calcareous grassland and former post industrial sites to connect existing colonies, in order to extend the range and population size. Some progress	↑	
		Create new areas of suitable habitat including soil scrapes to increase the number of sites by a further 4, e.g. on motorway and trunk road embankments. No new sites	↔	
		Continue to survey former / potential locations where chalk carpet could occur. Some progress	↑	
		Continue monitoring at Bishops Hill and Bishops Bowl and establish monitoring at the 2 other sites to determine any change in status of the chalk carpet. Achieved	↑	
SMALL BLUE BUTTERFLY	↑ = any progress	Continue to designate all known small blue sites that qualify as Local Wildlife Sites at the earliest instance. 7 sites	↑	↑
		Manage all known small blue colonies appropriately. Achieved	↑	
		Increase the number of permanent colonies from 6 to 20. 23 colonies	↑↑↑	
		Increase the number of sites suitable for colonisation from 6 to 20 by protecting and managing a further 10 sites that have been assessed as having the potential. 41 sites	↑↑↑	
		Undertake timed counts annually on all known sites on the same day to assess habitat condition and adult butterfly abundance. Achieved	↑	
		Survey all former locations to assess opportunities for re-colonisation. Achieved	↑	
		Establish habitat monitoring at all current sites and all sites that have held colonies in the last 10 years to determine any change of suitability for small blue. Achieved	↑	
OPEN MOSAIC HABITATS	↑ = any progress	Continue to select all qualifying open mosaic sites as Local Wildlife Sites . 15 sites	↑	↑
		Ensure that the protection of all designated SSSI and LWS brownfield sites is included in Local Development Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and any other relevant strategies. 4+ out of 7 Local Plans	↑	
		Ensure that new minor or major developments result in net biodiversity gain through adherence to the mitigation hierarchy. No net loss	↑	
		Maintain open mosaic habitat in favourable condition by appropriate management, especially at LWSs and priority sites identified in the National Inventory. 11 sites	↑	
		Restore 3ha of degraded priority sites by 2015 and a further 7ha by 2026, including the creation of areas of bare and disturbed soil for birds, e.g. turtle dove. Target exceeded (40ha)	↑↑	
		Take opportunities with developments to create new and temporary sites. 2 sites	↑	
ADDER	↓	Following many years with no verified sightings, it is proposed to put this action plan on hold until a sighting is confirmed. Actions will be formulated if presence is established. Actions related to relevant habitats will be continued through existing action plans.	↓	↓

FULL PROGRESS REPORTS FOR THE 2016 ACTION PLANS AND A LIST OF PARTNERS WILL BE ON THE WARWICKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST WEBSITE

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BLOODY NOSED BEETLE	↓	Actively encourage that biodiversity policies account for the needs of this species on the inhabited section of the disused railway west of Cawston Grange Farm and to protect the Coal Pit Lane site and other minor roads in the immediate area from localised development. No known progress	↔	↑
		Submit responses to any development proposals that may affect known populations to ensure that its existing sites to the west of Rugby are secured through mitigation/ compensation. 1 site	↑	
		Manage sites of existing beetle populations to meet the ecological needs of the species.	Grassland is being managed.	
		Continue to manage appropriately the areas at Ryton Wood Meadows, Bubbenhall Meadows and Dunsmore Heath Plateau, where introductions are underway. 2 sites		
		Create the potential for other suitable sites to support the species by phased introduction of its food-plants (<i>G. aparine</i> and <i>G. mollugo</i>) followed by trial population introductions of the beetle.	No known progress.	
		Take opportunities to implement seeding and management of the beetle's food-plants (<i>G. aparine</i> and <i>G. mollugo</i>) along recent and future development footprints in the Lawford Heath area.	Occasional records on some sites but no systematic surveying.	
		Continue to monitor existing natural populations (counting dead/ live adults/ larvae and mapping these observations). Record any changes in response to management practices at all locations.		
		Continue to monitor introduced populations at Dunsmore Heath Plateau, Ryton Wood Meadows and Bubbenhall Meadows.		
		Continue to monitor other sites in the Lawford Heath area for additional satellite populations.	↑	
Continue to update the map showing the location of all bloody-nosed beetle observations in the Lawford Heath area, indicating date periods and population size. Achieved	↑			
QUARRIES & GRAVEL PITS	↑ = any progress	Continue to select all qualifying quarries or gravel pits as Local Wildlife Sites . 21 sites	↑	↑
		Ensure that the protection of all designated quarries and gravel pits is included in Local Development Plans , Neighbourhood Plans and any other relevant strategies. 4+ out of 7 Local Plans	↗	
		Ensure that new minor or major developments result in net biodiversity gain through adherence to the mitigation hierarchy. No net loss	↗	
		Ensure the creation of quality wildlife habitat at 5 worked out quarries, (including the creation of artificial cliffs) across the whole site, or over part of the site during the active quarrying, in line with planning consents, for birds and invertebrates dependent on quarrying. 9 sites	↑↑	
		Actively work with the Mineral Production Association to ensure development proposals do not reduce the nature conservation value of sites. 2 mineral organisations at 8 sites	↑	
		During landfill site restoration promote the importance of capping with locally-sourced subsoil and creating topographic features, e.g. scrapes and banks, wetlands, etc. 8 sites	↑	
		Inform the specification for screen planting and bank creation prior to commencement of quarrying to maximise wildlife value. 3 sites	↑	
DOTTED BEE-FLY	↑ = any progress	Designate all remaining known <i>B. discolor</i> sites, and new sites, as Local Wildlife Sites . 6 sites	↑	↑
		Maintain an up-to-date listing of <i>B. discolor</i> sites and monitor losses and gains. Achieved	↑	
		Double the number of sites for <i>B. discolor</i> , aiming at strategic locations to strengthen existing populations in the Harbury/Ufton and Brailes/Ratley areas and to extend the range, potentially between these two existing foci.	Targeted actions no longer required in view of the natural increase, due to the increase/ spread of the 2 main mining bee hosts.	
		Prepare and implement management plans that increase the quality of at least 3 of the 11 existing sites by 2016 and another 3 by 2020, to fulfil the requirements of <i>B. discolor</i> /its hosts.		
		Work with quarrying companies and other key landowners to produce new sites suitable for <i>B. discolor</i> , as opportunities arise.		
		Actively target appropriate sites to include the habitat requirements of <i>B. discolor</i> in the management agreements of agri-environment schemes.		
		Monitor the effectiveness and success of any habitat management, enhancement and creation undertaken at key sites, and write up case studies.		
Identify more potential sites for <i>B. discolor</i> , targeting areas near to existing colonies.				
CUCKOO BEE	↑ = any progress	Following many years with no records, it is proposed to put this action plan on hold until a sighting is confirmed. The species may have been affected by recent poor weather during spring time. Napton Upper Quarry will continue to be checked by the county recorder. Actions related to its habitat will be continued through the Quarries & Gravel Pits plan.		↓

CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY STUDENTS TO OTHER ACTION PLANS

- In 2016 research into old parkland sites with potential opportunities for the restoration of habitat was continued by Teveil Walker, an undergraduate from Coventry University, in collaboration with the WCC Archaeology Team.
- In 2015 a trial of the use of green hay from Oldberrow church for seeding 5 urban churchyards was carried out by Lydia Bosire, a post-graduate student at the University of Warwick. In 2017 a survey of the sites by County ecologists found that there was an increase in the total number of species but not of the perennial plants typical of old grassland.

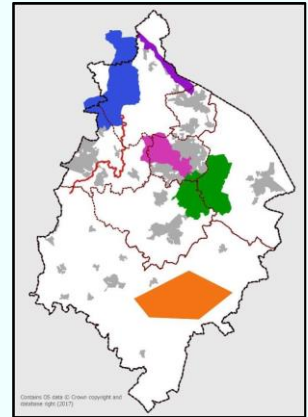
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LANDSCAPE SCALE SCHEMES

These are active on the ground, delivering the first phases of a 50 year vision, and comprise:

- ❖ **Tame Valley Wetlands:** a £2.5m landscape partnership scheme in delivery 2014-2018, led by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and a wide partnership of charities, local groups, councils and statutory bodies. In this regionally important area for wildfowl and wetland species, the vision is to create a landscape rich in wildlife and accessible to all. Since 2014, the TVW Scheme has achieved 1,196m of restored hedgerow, 660m of river re-naturalised, and 16ha of wetland restored, with funding support from HLF and Environment Agency. 5,362 participants have attended events and training courses, and 3,190 young people involved. Funding for the next phase of the landscape work is being sought for projects mid-2018 onwards. **Key themes identified for future projects are:** landscape scale habitat enhancement; opportunities from strategic planning; community engagement; development of TVW as a visitor destination.
- ❖ **Princethorpe Woodlands Living Landscape:** a wide partnership focussed on managing and restoring ancient and semi-natural woodlands and hedgerows. Led by WWT, the partnership's application to HLF was approved in November 2016, bringing over £1 million grant over 4 years delivery. In June 2017, the partnership project undertook an approved release of 38 dormice into one of the woodlands, led by the People's Trust for Endangered Species; subsequent monitoring has shown that breeding has occurred, not just in the nest boxes but in nests constructed elsewhere in the wood.
- ❖ **Southam Lias Grassland Landscape Area:** Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire, supported by VEOLIA & CEMEX, is undertaking a species recovery programme for the small blue butterfly in the Southam area. The project is also helping other rare butterflies such as grizzled and dingy skipper, and the chalk carpet moth.
- ❖ **River Blythe SSSI:** the river restoration plan, commissioned by Environment Agency and Natural England, is in its final draft, with implementation plans being produced to initiate action on the ground.
- ❖ **Anker Valley Living Landscape** and **Sherbourne Living Landscape:** active partnerships have been developed in these areas, including landowners, local authority, the voluntary sector and agency representatives. Initial projects have been identified and mapped. Funding applications are being developed and support is sought for these projects.



The Habitat Biodiversity Audit (HBA) Partnership

- ❖ Was established in 1996 by WWT, working with the 7 Local Authorities across Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull, Natural England and the Environment Agency. It is managed by WWT and based at Warwickshire County Council's Ecology Unit in Warwick.
- ❖ Provides up-to-date biodiversity data by surveying all habitats to Phase 1 methodology and to map digitally, with 20% of the area re-surveyed every year. The partnership has been expanded with Kier, managing agents for trunk roads in the sub-region for Highways England.
- ❖ Carries out detailed ground truthing of areas previously mapped from aerial photography has identified further sites, e.g. unrestored calcareous grassland.

The Wildlife Sites Project (LWSP)

- ❖ Began in 1999 to develop and maintain a formalised Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) system for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, and is part of the HBA Partnership.
- ❖ Designates sites following detailed site habitat survey (Phase 2) and review by a panel of experts. This has been expanded with 2 further local specialists.
- ❖ To date there are a total of 562 LWSs, covering 6668ha across the sub-region, ranging from woodlands, grasslands, post-industrial sites, hedgerows, rivers and canals. 22% of these are suitably managed and 21% are not; the status of 56% is unknown.
- ❖ Ensures that all LWSs receive management guidance and have a detailed site plan, to monitor the success of the management, and to assess their current condition on a 5 year rolling programme.

The Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Local Nature Partnership (LNP) was recognised by Government in 2013

It was established to:

- ❖ Drive positive change in the local natural environment, taking a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities.
- ❖ Contribute to achieving the Government's national environmental objectives locally, including identification of local ecological networks.
- ❖ Become local champions influencing decision-making relating to the natural environment and its value to social and economic outcomes.

The LNP works strategically and has Board Members from many sectors: Local Authorities, statutory agencies, Public Health, environment, NGOs and business.

Strategic Aim Themes: improving the quality of life, maximising benefits for society, restoring biodiversity and water quality improvements.

The LNP Board has endorsed a programme of landscape scale habitat restoration projects developed by the LNP Implementation Group and has developed the NIA criteria.

In 2016 the Tame Valley Wetlands became the first locally designated Nature Improvement Area in Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull, following the LNP Board approving a procedure for NIA.

Developing NIA as a destination to engage more people is a future theme. If you wish to be involved, contact: enquiries@tamevalleywetlands.co.uk

