



Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership

Partnership Bulletin June 2011

We are using this issue of our e-newsletter to update on the Natural Environment White paper. We want to get this information out quickly to you all but please bear in mind that new information and guidance is coming out weekly, so it's worth regularly linking to the Defra website for the latest information.

As the TVBP coordinator I will be coordinating the process of aligning the current work of the TVBP and our Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan with the White Paper and the forthcoming update of the England Biodiversity Strategy that is planned for publication in 2012. Do not hesitate to email or ring me on anything to do with this on 01287 636383 or santrob@teeswildlife.org

Sue Antrobus
21 June 2011

The Natural Environment White Paper

The Natural Environment White Paper, **The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature**, was published on the 7th June. It sets out how England's natural environment will be protected, restored and improved. The plans, in the first White Paper on the natural environment in 20 years, are directly linked to the research in the Natural Ecosystem Assessment which showed the strong economic arguments for safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment.

Some of the new initiatives announced in the White Paper are:

- Local Nature Partnerships – strategic partnerships of organisations that work to create a shared vision for their area and deliver integrated, environmental outcomes.
- Testing a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting in a number of pilot areas
- Nature Improvement Areas with opportunities to deliver ecological networks, both in terms of large area scale and where there are valuable benefits accruing to wildlife and people.

Visit: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/>

Local Nature Partnerships - a logical step forward for the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership

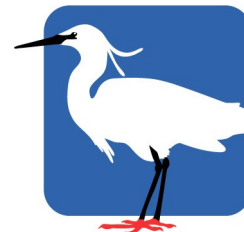
Local Nature Partnerships are one of the key proposals made in the Natural Environment White Paper. They will be strategic partnerships of organisations that work to create a shared vision for their area and deliver integrated, environmental outcomes. DEFRA are inviting applications for transition funding to help Local BAP groups and other local partnerships to widen their remit to develop a new integrated environmental vision and improve the natural environment in a collaborative way that reflects wider social and economic benefits. Local Nature Partnerships are anticipated to work closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships and the newly created Health and Wellbeing Partnerships.

What will Local Nature Partnerships do?

- demonstrate local leadership, raising awareness about the vital services and benefits which a healthy natural environment brings for people, communities and the local economy;
- use their knowledge and expertise to develop a shared environmental vision and set of priorities for their area (this could highlight how protection and enhancement of the natural environment can bring economic and social benefits or could include measures to establish and improve local ecological networks at a landscape scale);
- add value to a local area's development through contributing to local authority plans that affect the environment, as well as local plans and local development frameworks;
- help contribute to the Green Economy by, for example, providing relevant information for Local Enterprise Partnerships in development of their plans;
- bring together a range of local stakeholders, which may include people from local authorities, businesses, statutory authorities, civil society organisations, land managers, local record centres, local enterprise partnerships and people from communities themselves who can align efforts and make best use of available resources;
- co-operate with other partnerships where this results in more efficient use of resources and better outcomes. work at a landscape scale to improve the range of benefits and services we get from a healthy natural environment.

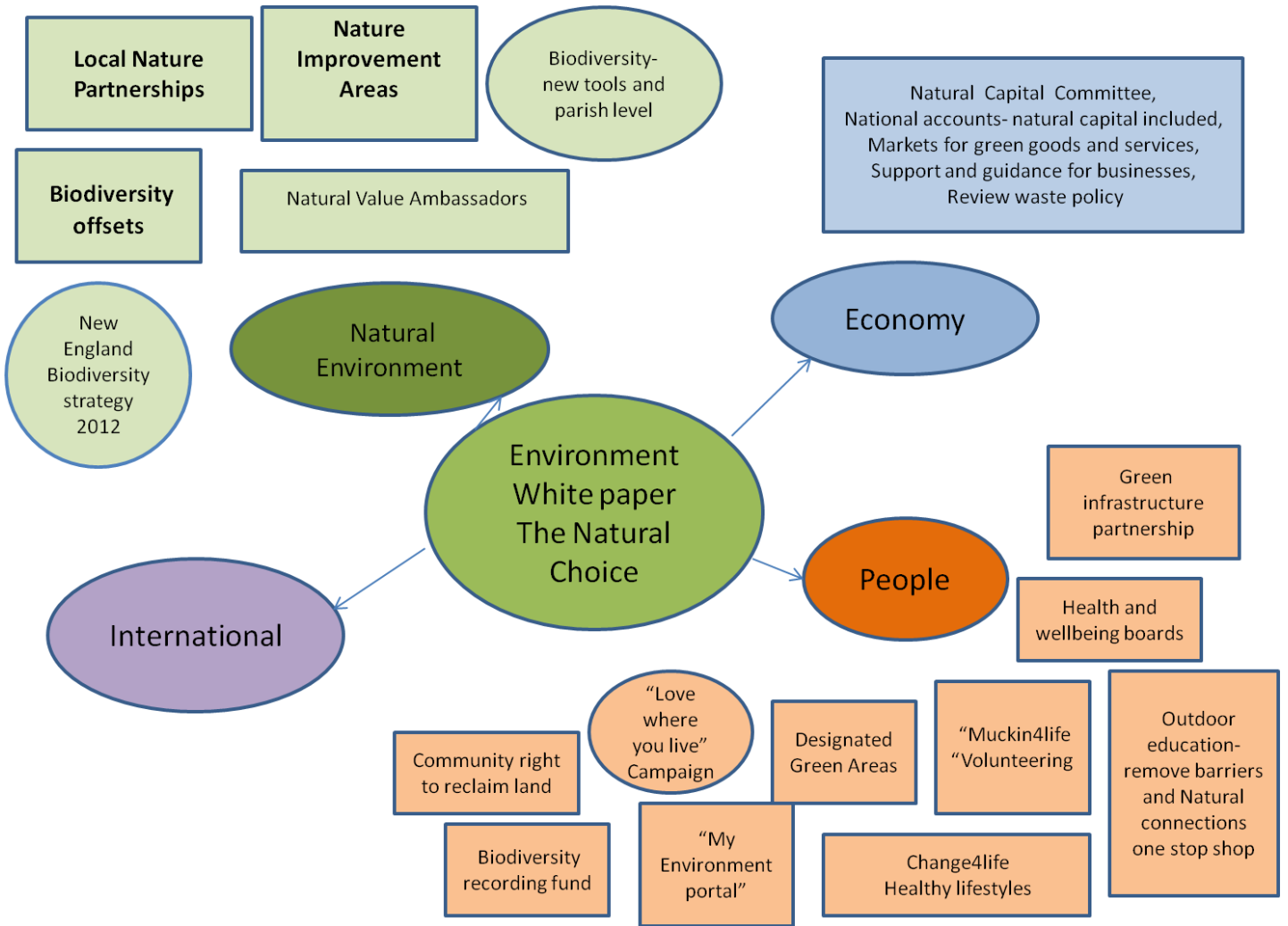
The TVBP is working on an application to become a Local Nature Partnership for the Tees Valley. The Tees Valley Biodiversity steering group met on the 12th June and decided that becoming a Local Nature Partnership for the Tees Valley was a positive, logical step forward as it is already carry out many of the functions proposed for Local Nature Partnerships. The TVBP will be submitting an application to meet the end of July deadline for transitional funding.

For more information contact Sue Antrobus: santrobus@teeswildlife.org.

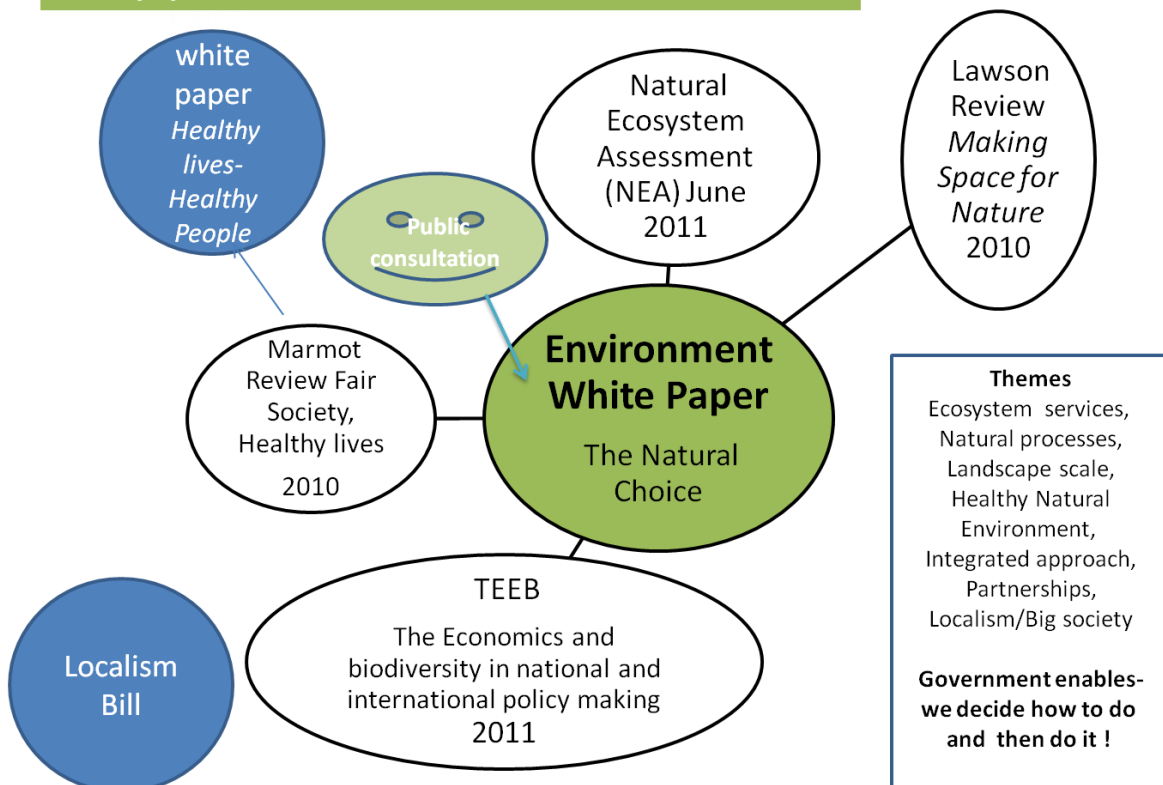


A one minute summary of the Environment White paper

Here is a very rough and ready summary of the Natural Environment White paper produced by Sue Antrobus. (The gap around the International purple bubble is simply because she has not read that chapter yet !)



Drivers and evidence base for the Natural Environment white paper



Nature Improvement Areas – the latest info

Newly announced in the Natural Environment Paper, these proposed areas are stimulating a lot of interest. At the moment there is little information on the Defra website but more is anticipated in July. There is a lot of speculation on the size and location of these areas. The TVBP steering group is recommending that we wait till the further guidance is out, to look at the requirements and then to consider an application for a Nature Improvement Area from the Tees Valley. As soon as we know more details we will be updating all partner organisations of the TVBP. Do remember that there will only be 12 in England in the first round. In the meantime I have lifted this from the Defra website for your information. Visit www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/nia/

Nature Improvement Areas are a new name for the “Ecological Restoration Zones” proposed by the *Making Space for Nature* Review. Although the characteristics of Nature Improvement Areas will vary across the country according to what is possible and what is needed, these will be places where:

- opportunities to deliver ecological networks, both in terms of large area scale and valuable benefits accruing to wildlife and people, are particularly high;
- a shared vision exists among a wide partnership including statutory and voluntary sectors;
- significant enhancements of the network can be achieved over large areas by enlarging and enhancing existing wildlife sites, improving ecological connectivity and/or creating new sites;
- the surrounding land use is better integrated with the management of the ecological network; wildlife habitats and underpinning ecosystem processes are restored, helping to mitigate climate change impacts; and
- people are inspired by their enhanced experience of the outside world.

Aims

Nature Improvement Areas should contain all the components that the *Making Space for Nature* review set out for an ecological network:

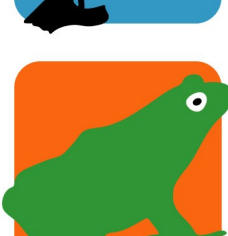
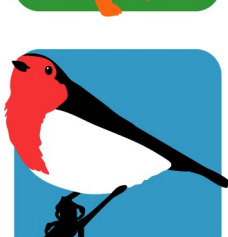
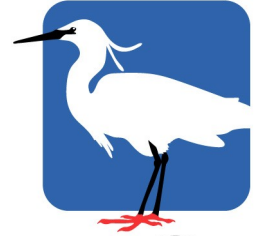
- core areas, primarily existing wildlife sites;
- corridors and stepping stones, which could be created/restored;
- restoration areas, where priority habitats are created;
- buffer zones, that reduce pressures on core areas;
- sustainable use areas, that provide a sympathetic and permeable matrix within which other components sit.

They should aim to achieve significant and demonstrable enhancements of the ecological network over large areas by undertaking the actions prioritised in the review:

1. Improving the management of existing wildlife sites
2. Increasing the size of existing wildlife sites
3. Increasing the number of wildlife sites
4. Improving connectivity between sites
5. Creating wildlife corridors

Funding-To support the establishment of the first tranche of twelve Nature Improvement Areas, the Natural Environment White Paper announced funding of £7.5m over the spending review period of 2011-14. In addition, we have allocated resources to help establish an information and knowledge-sharing network for Nature Improvement Areas.

Timelines and applications- Defra will launch the competition for applications for the first 12 Nature Improvement Areas in late June. All details, including guidance, application forms and timescales will be made available on the Natural England website at that point. Broadly, the timetable will be that initial applications will be due by the autumn, and more detailed second-stage applications by the end of the calendar year. We expect that the first twelve Nature Improvement Areas can begin work by 1 April 2012.



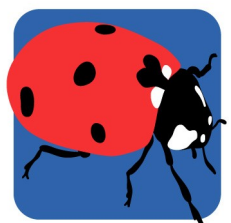
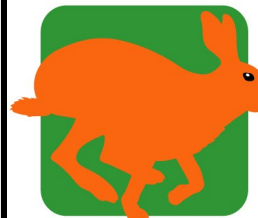
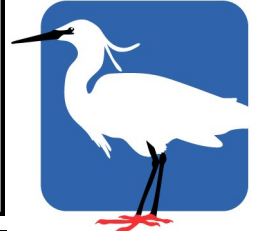


Tees Valley Pondscape report and database CD published

The final report of the Tees Valley Pondscape project (2008-11) with ecological data sets will be available in a CD format from the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership in July. Ecological surveying and mapping carried out as part of the project has produced a large database of information that will of great interest to a wide range of people including land use planners, ecological consultants, naturalists and conservation practitioners.

To reserve your copy contact Sue Antrobus at santrobus@teeswildlife.org

Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership



Guide defining Brownfield habitats

When we prepared our Tees Valley Brownfields habitat action plan it was frustrating that there appeared to be no detailed clear definition of the UKBAP habitat "Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land". Nick Brodin from Natural England has helpfully signposted us to a report on the DEFRA website that has been prepared by ADAS entitled "Definition and mapping of open mosaic habitats on previously developed land". Published in 2010, it reports on a project that aimed to "provide an agreed definition of this habitat type to aid 'identification on the ground'; determine the extent, distribution and quality of all of the habitat in the UK and provide a comprehensive list of species of conservation importance associated with it"

It can be downloaded from <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=2&ProjectID=16067>

The Tees Valley Rocks!

We have a very active and energetic RIGS group (Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites) here in the Tees Valley, which has just announced the publication of the Tees Valley Geodiversity Action Plan (GAP) 2011. The new GAP, which is a five year plan, now covers Darlington Borough alongside the previously covered Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Stockton and Redcar & Cleveland Boroughs. The GAP sets out a plan to protect, promote and enhance the valuable geological and geomorphological heritage of the Tees Valley.

Copies of the GAP are available from Tees Valley Wildlife Trust or can be downloaded from www.tvrigns.org.uk. The GAP will be kept updated online as will details of all the work being done by TVRIGS across the region. For more details contact Beth Andrews on beth.geo@gmail.com.

UK Biodiversity Indicators in Your Pocket (BIYP)

This year's set of biodiversity indicators has recently appeared on the DEFRA website with the usual traffic light system. I do remember when these publications were handy little booklets that could fit into your pocket to pull out and read in a dull moment on the train, but they are now sizeable downloads!

Visit: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4229>

www.teesvalleybiodiversity.org.uk

A boost to the wildlife of three urban Tees Valley grasslands

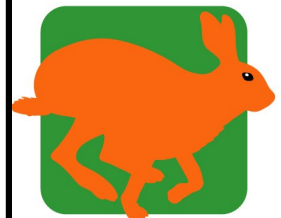
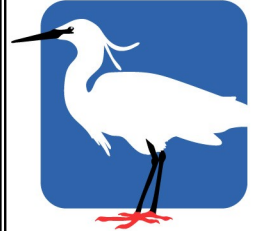
The TVBP coordinated the improvement of floral diversity of three urban meadows in the Tees Valley with a grant from the Tree Council. Working with volunteers and local authority staff the funding was used to purchase local wild plants and ecological expertise from the Wildflower Ark. At Village Park in Thornaby, volunteers of all ages from the Village Park Residents Association (pictured here) joined Barry Hunter of Stockton Council and Martin Allen of the Wildflower Ark.



They planted wildflowers into existing recreational grassland as part of a plan to improve the wildlife interest of this popular pocket park. In Darlington, as part of a wider programme of more natural urban grassland management, Countryside Officer Phil Roxby involved four community groups in an evening wildflower work party at Mill lane, along the River Skerne. Over in Hartlepool, volunteers worked with Summerhill Warden John Swallow. Wetland plants were used to further improve a wetland meadow.

All the plants provided by the Wildflower Ark were of Tees Valley local provenance and carefully selected following ecological assessment of each site to ensure the correct planting mix. Jeremy Garside of Tees Valley Wildlife Trust said "This is a great example how some effective coordination of local partner organisations and volunteers can achieve good things for wildlife at very little cost."

Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership



Tree Bumblebee visits Stately home in Middlesbrough

Christine Corbett, of the Boro Becks Team was buzzing with excitement when she unexpectedly found a tree bumblebee sunning itself on the gravel driveway of Ormesby Hall. The Tree bumblebee (*Bombus hypnorum*), was first recorded in south east England 10 years ago and has

been rapidly expanding its populations north and south. This distinctive bee, with a ginger thorax, black abdomen and white tail is a lowland species with records strongly associated with parks and gardens. It is an effective pollinator, especially of fruit trees and fruiting plants such as raspberry. Stuart Roberts of the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society is coordinating the recording of this species (and is updating the distribution map as sightings come in). So keep your eyes peeled as Ian Bond, Ecologist at Hartlepool Borough Council has since spotted one in his back garden in Darlington. For further information visit www.bwars.com or the bumblebee conservation Trust at www.bumblebeeconservation.org.uk/tree_bee.htm

New Living Waterways Project in the Tees Valley

This new initiative in the Tees Valley is a partnership between the Environment Agency and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust and will work to improve watercourses by providing better management, habitat creation and initiatives for Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats.

Newly appointed project Officer, Kenny Crooks will be working in partnership with local communities and the Environment Agency to develop and deliver a programme of activities that can tackle issues such as flood risk and bring benefits for people and wildlife. For more details contact Kenny at the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust at kcrooks@teeswildlife.org

Environmental law tool kit

For the last year, the Environmental Law Foundation (E.L.F.) has been running a project to raise awareness of environmental rights in the U.K. One of the many things learned from residents through their events is the huge extent to which air pollution, noise pollution and fly-tipping blight peoples' lives, particularly those living in more marginalised communities.

As part of the project they put together four legal tool-kits that aim to help ordinary citizens access the planning system and understand their environmental rights. Each is now free to download from the E.L.F. website.

1. Your Rights in Planning Decisions

<http://www.elflaw.org/wp-content/themes/elftemplate/media/Your-Rights-in-Planning-Decisions-low-res.pdf>

2. E.L.F. Guide to Noise Pollution

<http://www.elflaw.org/wp-content/themes/elftemplate/media/ELF-Guide-to-Noise-Pollution.pdf>

3. E.L.F. Guide to Air Pollution

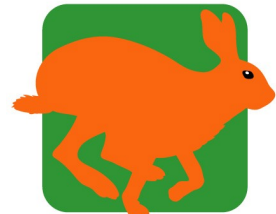
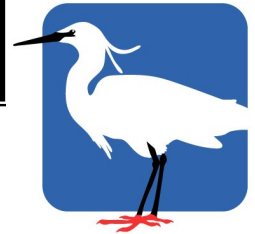
<http://www.elflaw.org/wp-content/themes/elftemplate/media/ELF-Guide-to-Noise-Pollution.pdf>

4. E.L.F. Guide to Fly Tipping

<http://www.elflaw.org/wp-content/themes/elftemplate/media/E.L.F.-Guide-to-Fly-Tipping.pdf>



Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership



What happened to the UKBAP website www.ukbap.org.uk?

As part of the UK government's review of websites the UKBAP site has been 'closed' and the core content migrated into the JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) website. The UKBAP site hadn't been updated for some time now so was getting a little dated. I have just had a whiz around this updated JNCC website and I would recommend it as a great first port of call for UK and international Biodiversity information, Species and habitat information, protected sites, marine, geo-conservation research and trends, It is a large site, but I found it really easy to navigate and user friendly. All of the key UK BAP documents will be available on the new web-pages. In addition, the original site will be available through the National Archives, which regularly archives UK central government websites.

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/> and for the UK biodiversity Action Plan go to <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=5155>

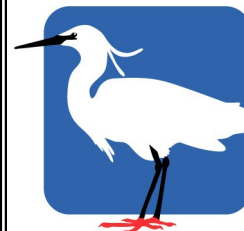
To download the spring issue of UK Biodiversity newsletter visit http://tna.europarchive.org/20110303145238/http://www.jncc.gov.uk/_ukbap/UKBAP_BiodiversityNews-52.pdf.

Million Ponds online ponds toolkit is growing

The Million Ponds Project has updated and expanded the Pond Creation Toolkit - a suite of resources that helps pond makers make the best possible ponds.

- Twenty two species dossiers have been written in partnership with national species experts, covering pond creation for 50 Biodiversity Action Plan Species
- Seven habitat and problem solving factsheets have been produced, providing detailed design information for creating ponds in woodland, grassland, heathland, wetlands, river floodplains, plus overcoming the issues associated with ponds in areas of public access, and designs to minimise risk of birdstrike.
- The BAP Species Map has been updated to show the distribution and status of 101 Biodiversity Action Plan species. The map allows you to click on any location in England and find out which species occur within 1km or 5km of a location and links to further information including species dossiers.

The factsheets on pond creation on aggregate extraction sites have been revised and extended to cover more topics, and now includes case studies. These factsheets are written specifically to help the minerals industry identify and make the most of pond creation opportunities. All these resources are available free to download from www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds



Lecture: Brownfields and Butterflies – A Conservation Dilemma

IEEM (Institution of Ecology and Environmental Management) are hosting a North East England Section lecture at Sunderland University by David Wainwright on 29th June 2011 at 7:30 pm. The lecture will examine the ecological requirements of the dingy skipper, the small blue and the grayling butterflies and will highlight relevant examples of their conservation which has happened despite redevelopment of their breeding areas. Attendance is free, but all planning to attend are encouraged to contact Andrew Cherrill to facilitate catering: andrewcherrill@sunderland.ac.uk

Tees Rivers Trust/ FWAG event

North East FWAG invites you to a river walk to see the Tees Rivers Trust - Clow Beck Habitat Scheme. Meeting on Wednesday 6th July at 6.30pm at North Farm, Newton Morrell, DL10 6HQ (between Darlington and Barton). The lower reaches of the beck are designated as Poor Ecological Status in the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) classification and the Tees Rivers Trust with funding from the DEFRA WFD improvement scheme, have carried out works aimed at improving the riparian and in-stream habitats. With support and input from the landowners these schemes were completed in April this year and the benefits are already being seen on the bankside. The work has been complimented by the Environment Agency's scheme to improve fish passage at a redundant gauging weir at the beck/river confluence by the construction of a 'rock-ramp' fish pass. Attendance is free for FWAG members, £5 for non-members contribution on the night. Please call the FWAG office on 01833 696634 or email tynetees@fwag.org.uk to confirm your attendance

Biodiversity indicator for Local authorities

Many of us became very familiar with National Indicator 197, which until April 2011 was an indicator for Local authorities to report on as “ **Proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented**”. The Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership acted to verify the outputs of Local Authorities against National Indicator 197. The Indicator set has now been superseded by the Single Data List. The good news is that the Local Sites indicator is still there. Local Authorities who had previously supplied data on NI197 will continue to provide the same data as part of their response to the Single Data List. More information from the Defra website can be found at <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/single-data-list-guidance.pdf>

Northumbria Mammal Group needs your records

The Environmental Records Information Centre North East, has compiled a series of maps of mammal distribution for Northumbria Mammal Group (NMG) based on all of the mammal records that they have permission to use. These have kindly been hosted by the Natural History Society of Northumbria on their website along with other pages about NMG. What we would like to do is to get as many people as possible to view those pages and to submit any mammal records that they have that might fill in some of the gaps in the species maps. NMG's aim is to publish a book on the Mammals in 2012.

As an incentive, as part of a grant from the Open Air Laboratories, the NMG are giving a year's free membership of NMG to anyone submitting a mammal record (which doesn't necessarily have to fill in any of the gaps on the map and can be as simple as a single molehill, though the more records the better). If you are already a member of NMG (and particularly if you are one of those rare ones who pays their membership on time) you will get a year's free membership next time it's due for renewal. The maps and a simple electronic membership form can be seen at www.northumbriamammalgroup.org.uk

New amphibian handbook

A new Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook has been published by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation. It is a resource for a range of users including green infrastructure managers, conservation practitioners and volunteers. Chapters include a summary of species requirements, current legislation and policy, pond creation and restoration, disease and mortality, terrestrial habitats, landscape ecology and translocation and reintroductions. <http://www.arc-trust.org/downloads/FINALLORES-J.pdf>

Next Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership meeting dates

Steering Group – 4 October at Billingham Beck Visitor Centre, 10am

Wetland and Coastal Action Group – 13 September at Billingham Beck Visitor Centre, 10am

Rural Action Group —16 August at Nature's World at 10am

Minutes and meeting notes are posted on our website at <http://teesvalleybiodiversity.org.uk/library/tees-valley-bap-newsletters>

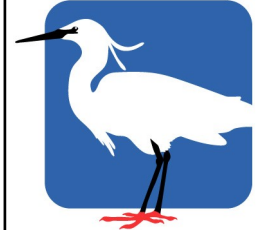
Thank you to Stockton Borough Council and Nature's World for providing rooms for these meetings.

And finally.....Gorse flower cordial—not for the fainthearted

If you are feeling that elderflower cordial is a bit passé why not try making this simple non-alcoholic cordial from the fragrant blossoms of gorse. It was recommended by Marion Hannaford from Durham who says the syrup is delicious poured over vanilla ice cream... but some strong gloves are needed to protect your fingers from the spines when collecting the flowers.

If you have a go at making, do get tell us how successful it was. There is a recipe at Eat Weeds on

www.eatweeds.co.uk/gorse-flower-cordial-recipe



STOP PRESS:

Defra forms a partnership with ITV to launch a Saturday night show to decide the Competition for the 12 Nature Improvement Areas in England.

