

# Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan FINAL Progress Report for 2011-2016: 2nd Tranche of 11 Plans

## IN 2016 WE REPORTED ON 11 ACTION PLANS ASSOCIATED WITH FARMLAND:

**FARMLAND BIRDS, LAPWING, RARE BUMBLEBEES, SCARCE ARABLE PLANTS, WHITE CLAWED CRAYFISH, GREAT CRESTED NEWT, FIELD MARGINS, NEUTRAL GRASSLAND, PONDS, HEDGEROWS, RIVERS & STREAMS**

IN 2017 WE WILL BE REPORTING ON 11 PLANS ASSOCIATED WITH CALCAREOUS, QUARRY & OPEN MOSIAC HABITATS

### ACTION FOR FARMLAND BIRDS, LAPWING, RARE BUMBLEBEES, SCARCE ARABLE PLANTS and FIELD MARGINS

A key element of Natural England's (NE) new competitive Countryside Stewardship scheme, the 'Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife' package, is a collection of measures, simple to deliver but effective, and benefitting 5 plans:

- 'middle-tier' applicants for options such as pollen and nectar mixes and wild bird seed mixes will be expected to aim for 3-5% of their cultivated land under these sorts of options; higher tier applicants must aim for 5-10%.
- Options for establishing flower-rich field margins and for creating fallow margins for scarce arable plants, will provide habitat for invertebrates and pollinators and feeding areas for farmland birds.
- The option for lapwing nest plots will also benefit scarce arable plants.



Two pairs of tree sparrows have nested in boxes installed in 2015 at Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground near Tysoe.

### ACTION FOR HEDGEROWS

- restoration figures are over 400% of our target for 2015, from hedgelaying, coppicing and gapping-up by ELS/HLS options (NE), by BCW at Ryton Wood and by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) at Brandon Marsh and Tame Valley.
- expansion figures are over 50% of our target for 2016 by planting at over 14 sites.
- planting of blackthorn and elm for brown and white-letter hairstreak (BCW).

### ACTION FOR NEUTRAL GRASSLAND AND PONDS

**NEUTRAL GRASSLAND:** work at 5 sites to improve the habitat has been carried out by Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire (BCW); all photographs by Mike Slater:

- management for butterflies at **Ryton Wood Meadows**, after the site had been taken into Higher Level Stewardship in 2008, has produced a 22% increase in numbers. This has included blackthorn rotational clearance plots for **brown hairstreak butterfly**.
- coppicing on a rotational basis at **Oversley Wood** and **Weston & Waverley Woods**, with grass cutting by the Forestry Commission.
- rotational scrub removal at **Pagets Pool Escarpment**.
- scallop creation at **Bilton Cutting** disused railway line.

**PONDS:** scrub clearance for butterflies at **Weston Wood** by BCW has opened up a pond and its margin.



Ryton Wood Meadows



Oversley Wood



### ACTION FOR RARE BUMBLEBEES

Quarry owners at 8 sites have removed scrub to improve the habitat for bees and other insects that use bare ground, with advice from BCW. At **Southam Quarry** 3 bee banks have been created and poles erected with nest site holes.



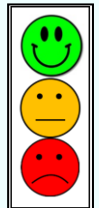
Nelsons Quarry before scrub removal © Mike Slater



Nelsons Quarry after scrub removal © Mike Slater

### CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY STUDENTS TO OTHER ACTION PLANS

- an action in **PARKS & PUBLIC OPEN SPACES** has been achieved by **Corinne Muir, an M.Sc. student at Warwick University**. She has developed a traffic light system for monitoring the condition of all ecologically important parks and greenspaces. This will be used to implement two further actions in this plan.
- 4 actions in the **BLOODY-NOSED BEETLE** action plan have been progressed by **Richard Brown (Coventry University)** in his dissertation: 'Factors affecting the distribution of the Bloody-nosed Beetle (*Timarcha tenebricosa*) in Warwickshire'. This has been submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an M.Sc. in Environmental Management.



**INTERIM SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES FOR ACTION 2017-2020.** We are still gathering information from our partners on progress with 11 action plans. There are key plans and actions which are priorities, with need for further action:

- ❖ More maintenance of condition of **NEUTRAL GRASSLAND** – the habitat is subject to continuing pressure and loss. While our target has been achieved, only 30% of the whole area of our neutral grassland is being managed.
- ❖ More action for **RIVERS & STREAMS** - there is considerable work to do to restore water courses.
- ❖ More action for **WHITE CLAWED CRAYFISH** - populations are under extreme pressure.
- ❖ Identify and achieve condition of 1 cluster of **PONDS** per district, by appropriate management.

- NEW ACTION PLANS**
- the **GREAT CRESTED NEWT** action plan will be rewritten to protect **ALL** our amphibians: newts, frogs and toads.
  - the **LAPWING** and **SNIBE** plans will be combined to protect **ALL** our scarce waders, including redshank and curlew.
  - the **FISH** action plan will be completed.

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Progress 2011-2016

Key to status: Good progress Some progress No change Decline

ACTION PLAN	STATUS 2008-2010	WE ARE REPORTING ON THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS IN 11 OF OUR BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS:	STATUS 2011-2016	
			ACTION	PLAN
NEUTRAL GRASSLAND	denoted any progress	Continue to select all qualifying lowland neutral grassland sites as <b>LWSs</b> . <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
		Ensure that new minor or major developments result in <b>net biodiversity gain</b> through adherence to the mitigation hierarchy. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
		Achieve favourable condition of <b>300ha</b> of existing neutral grassland by 2015. <span style="float:right">Target achieved</span>		
		Continue restoration of degraded neutral grassland by at least <b>323ha</b> by 2015 <span style="float:right">Target achieved at 5 + sites</span>		
		Expand the area of neutral grassland by <b>63ha</b> by 2015, including <b>4 sites of at least 5ha</b> . <span style="float:right">Target achieved at 10 + sites; 4 sites of at least 5ha achieved</span>		
		<b>Work at a landscape scale</b> , focusing effort on identified important clusters of neutral grassland. Target areas are Tame Valley floodplain, West Arden, Central Arden. <span style="float:right">Some progress, 4 sites</span>		
		Identify sites for <b>potential expansion</b> of neutral grassland. <span style="float:right">No progress</span>		
		Identify <b>plant indicator species</b> for assessing the quality of neutral grassland. <span style="float:right">Achieved</span>		
		Use <b>indicator species criteria for monitoring</b> neutral grassland condition and expansion every 5 years, particularly on LWSs. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
ARABLE FIELD MARGINS	denoted any progress	Expand the extent of the habitat by <b>200ha</b> by 2015. <span style="float:right">Achieved via new NE package</span>		
		Secure <b>further uptake of agri-environment schemes</b> , targeting sites where field margins can benefit wildlife most. <span style="float:right">In progress via new NE package</span>		
		Maintain a <b>digitised inventory</b> of known key sites and define areas where field margins are of high current, or greatest potential, biodiversity value. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
		<b>Monitor butterfly populations</b> using Butterfly Conservation's 'Field Margin Assessment' form'. <span style="float:right">50 forms</span>		
		Inform and advise on the <b>management of field margins</b> to land owners in order to illustrate best practice, at relevant events and by placing material on websites. <span style="float:right">4 events</span>		
SCARCE ARABLE PLANTS	denoted any progress	Secure <b>further uptake of agri-environment schemes</b> , targeting sites and appropriate management where scarce arable plants are most appropriate and/or support other wildlife. <span style="float:right">In progress via new NE package</span>		
		Continue to monitor/maintain an inventory of known key sites for <b>15 scarce arable plants</b> . <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
		Record the presence of <b>further scarce arable plants</b> during other survey work to extend the existing inventory. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
		Digitally map existing locations of scarce arable plants and share with Natural England. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
FARM-LAND BIRDS		Ensure management agreements under agri-environment schemes are sympathetic to the nesting and wintering requirements of the <b>grey partridge, skylark, tree sparrow, corn bunting, turtle dove, linnet, yellow wagtail, reed bunting and yellow hammer</b> where known to occur. <span style="float:right">In progress via new NE package</span>		
		Target agri-environment schemes for <b>corn bunting and turtle dove</b> with relevant technical tailoring to ensure the species has safe nesting habitat in the right places. <span style="float:right">In progress via new NE package</span>		
		Actively promote <b>nest-box schemes for tree sparrows</b> as appropriate to the farm until the species decline is reversed and population is considered secure. <span style="float:right">1 site</span>		
		Ensure the area of <b>relevant farmland bird options currently in ELS and HLS</b> are transferred into Mid or Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship. <span style="float:right">In progress via new NE package</span>		
LAPWING		<b>Increase populations</b> at Brandon Marsh, Dosthill / Kingsbury Water Park and Salford Priors quarry. <span style="float:right">Increase at Dosthill, decreases at Salford Priors and Brandon Marsh</span>		
		Ensure <b>best use of agri-environment schemes</b> in wet grassland management in conjunction with appropriate capital works to manage water levels. <span style="float:right">In progress via new NE package</span>		
		<b>Monitor the existing 3 key sites</b> and any additional sites annually, recording chick survival rates. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
		Increase the area of wet grassland for waders. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
RARE BUMBLE BEES	denoted any progress	Prepare and implement <b>management plans that increase the quality</b> of at least 1 of the 7 existing sites between Stretton-on-Fosse and Great Wolford by 2016. <span style="float:right">No progress</span>		
		<b>Work with quarrying companies</b> to improve the quality of habitat around existing colonies of the rarer bumblebees as opportunities arise. <span style="float:right">8 sites</span>		
		<b>Double the number of sites</b> for rare bumblebees, aiming at strategic locations to strengthen existing populations and extend the range. <span style="float:right">No progress</span>		
		Actively target appropriate sites to include the habitat requirements of rare bumblebees in the management agreements of agri-environment schemes. Encourage uptake of new <b>Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Packages</b> . <span style="float:right">In progress via new NE package</span>		
		Maintain an <b>up-to-date listing of rare bumblebee sites</b> and monitor losses and gains. <span style="float:right">Sporadic progress</span>		
HEDGEROWS		Continue to select all qualifying hedgerows as <b>LWSs</b> and enter onto database. <span style="float:right">2 sites, 2 potential sites</span>		
		Ensure that new minor or major developments result in <b>net biodiversity gain</b> through adherence to the mitigation hierarchy. <span style="float:right">In progress</span>		
		Maintain the <b>39.63 km of identified species-rich hedgerows</b> , (HBA, 2017), making effective use of agri-environment schemes. <span style="float:right">Some progress</span>		
		<b>Manage hedgerows</b> for targeted species of butterflies by: <span style="float:right">10 sites achieved</span>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>managing elm hedgerows in suitable condition, encouraging use of disease resistant elm to <b>maintain white-letter hairstreak butterfly</b> in a minimum of <b>30 out of 37 x 10km<sup>2</sup></b> <span style="float:right">In progress</span></li> <li>planting relevant food plants, especially blackthorn, in order to <b>increase the breeding occurrence of brown hairstreak butterfly to 10 x 10km<sup>2</sup> squares</b>. <span style="float:right">Achieved</span></li> </ul>		
		Expand the length of hedgerows by <b>planting 11.5km of native species-rich hedges</b> annually to give a total increase of 69km by 2016, using planning obligations where relevant. <span style="float:right">At least 37km planted</span>		

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HEDGE-ROWS continued	↔	Restore 16 km of degraded hedgerow by 2015. <span style="float: right;">At least 67km achieved</span>	↑	↑
		Ensure that maintenance, restoration and expansion of hedgerows take account of the need for feeding habitats and flight lines for bats. <span style="float: right;">26 boxes installed in 2 NE agreements</span>	↑	
		Complete the programme of hedgerow surveys to enable mapping of species rich hedgerows within Princethorpe Woodlands landscape area by 2014. <span style="float: right;">In progress</span>	↑	
		Provide practical demonstrations on hedgerow planting and management in Princethorpe Woodlands landscape area - at least 2 per year across the sub-region. <span style="float: right;">Target achieved</span>	↑	
RIVERS AND STREAMS	↑ denoted any progress	Assess and notify all qualifying water courses as LWSs including the Tame by April 2017, the Leam and Anker by December 2017, the Itchen, Cole, Dene and Stour by December 2018 and the Sowe and Sherbourne by December 2019. <span style="float: right;">In progress</span>	↑	↑
		Use the Catchment Based Approach to identify and deliver mitigation measures required to improve condition of water bodies. <span style="float: right;">2 plans, 3 sites</span>	↑	
		Deliver Restoration Projects to improve water quality and ecology. <span style="float: right;">4 projects</span>	↑	
		Implement schemes to tackle identified issues on priority sites to ensure that no water bodies in Warwickshire deteriorate, continue to aim for GES. <span style="float: right;">6 schemes</span>	↑	
		Prioritise the removal of physical barriers to fish movement, re-naturalise rivers and encourage and enable fish migration using any means and opportunities. <span style="float: right;">8 sites</span>	↑	
		Actively implement invasive non-native species eradication plans to include Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and North American mink. Prevent the spread of non-native crayfish and killer and demon shrimps through effective biosecurity measures. <span style="float: right;">10 sites min.</span>	↑	
		Tackle urban diffuse pollution through community engagement projects and using the Catchment based Approach, applying the 10 point Plan. <span style="float: right;">4 projects</span>	↑	
		Protect rivers from a changing climate utilising local initiatives, and agri-environment schemes administered by NE. <span style="float: right;">Some progress via uptake of NE options plus 3 sites min.</span>	↑	
		Create artificial sand martin nesting banks - 2 to be installed in Tame Valley by 2017. <span style="float: right;">Target achieved</span>	↑	
		Develop innovative invertebrate monitoring schemes engaging communities in learning about and monitoring their local rivers and streams. <span style="float: right;">2 sites min.</span>	↑	
		Actively promote the Check Clean Dry Campaign to protect native species from non-native species threats and diseases. <span style="float: right;">In progress</span>	↑	
		Create an action plan for fish to inform and focus on actions required to tackle fish population failures and migration issues. <span style="float: right;">In progress</span>	↑	
WHITE CLAWED CRAYFISH	↔	Ensure all known sites are considered for designation as LWSs. <span style="float: right;">3 sites, 2 potential sites</span>	↑	↓
		Maintain the present population and range by undertaking positive habitat management works, linking populations on particular watercourses/sites to improve ecological resistance. <span style="float: right;">Not achieved</span>	↓	
		Implement appropriate and feasible measures to control the spread of crayfish plague and eradicate non-native crayfish where they pose a threat to populations of white-clawed crayfish. <span style="float: right;">No progress</span>	↔	
		Extend surveys on appropriate watercourses to determine the extent of both native and non-native crayfish populations, with reference to historic records where appropriate. <span style="float: right;">No progress</span>	↔	
PONDS	↑ denoted any progress	Continue to select all qualifying ponds as LWSs and enter onto database. <span style="float: right;">2 sites, 2 potential sites</span>	↑	↑
		Ensure that new minor or major developments result in net biodiversity gain through adherence to the mitigation hierarchy. <span style="float: right;">In progress</span>	↑	
		Promote the creation of ponds through the biodiversity off-setting process. <span style="float: right;">Achieved by Rugby Borough Council</span>	↑	
		Maintain favourable ecological condition of all existing networks of ponds with surrounding buffering habitat, by appropriate management. <span style="float: right;">No progress on networks</span>	↔	
		Restore 44 degraded ponds and their surrounding buffering habitat by 2015. <span style="float: right;">14 ponds min.</span>	↑	
		Expand the area of the habitat by creating 44 new ponds with surrounding buffering habitat within 250m of existing ponds by 2015. <span style="float: right;">Target achieved</span>	↑	
		Implement invasive species control e.g. of least pondweed ( <i>Potamogeton pusillus</i> ). <span style="float: right;">1 site</span>	↑	
		Carry out mapping to enable the identification of 1 cluster of ponds per district. <span style="float: right;">In progress</span>	↑	
		Audit the condition of all identified pond clusters. <span style="float: right;">No progress for clusters</span>	↔	
		Promote pond conservation by holding a promotion campaign. <span style="float: right;">4 events</span>	↑	
GREAT CRESTED NEWT	↓	Set criteria to allow clusters of great crested newt breeding ponds to be considered for statutory designation and as LWSs. <span style="float: right;">In progress</span>	↑	↑
		Campaign to further encourage Local Authorities to act in line with best practice guidelines as part of their statutory duties and as part of the planning process. <span style="float: right;">Some progress</span>	↑	
		Implement a programme of pond construction in identified target areas. <span style="float: right;">No progress with programme</span>	↔	
		Identify areas that have been under-recorded and prioritise for surveys. <span style="float: right;">Achieved</span>	↑	
		Undertake surveys to assess pond clusters as important GCN breeding sites. <span style="float: right;">Some progress</span>	↑	
		Initiate a programme of targeted pond surveys to determine status of great crested newt populations in the prioritised areas. <span style="float: right;">Achieved</span>	↑	
		Provide National Amphibian & Reptile Recording System (NARRS) training annually to ensure a supply of volunteers to undertake surveys. <span style="float: right;">Achieved</span>	↑	

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

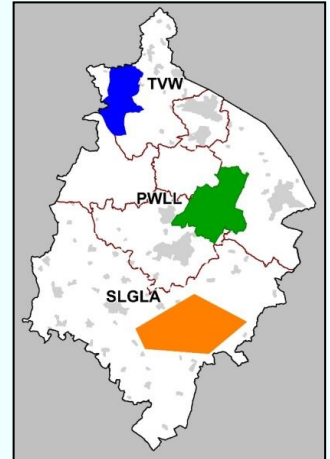
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### LANDSCAPE SCALE SCHEMES

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

- ❖ **Tame Valley Wetlands (TVW):** 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 wetland landscape, rich in wildlife and accessible to all. The scheme includes wetland creation and river restoration, focussed on a number of LBAP priority habitats and species including barn owl, snipe, water vole, otter, black poplar and bats.
- ❖ **Princethorpe Woodlands Living Landscape (PWLL):** a wide partnership focussed on managing and restoring ancient and semi-natural woodlands and hedgerows. Started in 2004, it has delivered 6.2km of hedgerow restoration and 13.4 ha of woodland management since 2012. Led by WWT, the partnership submitted the second round application to HLF in August which was approved in November 2016, bringing over £1 million grant over 4 years delivery.
- ❖ **Southam Lias Grassland Landscape Area (SLGLA):** Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire, supported by VEOLIA & CEMEX, is undertaking a species recovery programme for the small blue butterfly in the Southam area. The aim of the project is to save the remaining 3 colonies and restore 50 sites in the area to establish 30 colonies by 2020. The project will also help other rare butterflies such as grizzled and dingy skipper, and the chalk carpet moth.



### 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.
- ❖ To provide 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.
- ❖ To identify sites of biodiversity potential for the restoration and expansion of habitats. Indicator species criteria are used for monitoring their condition and expansion every 5 years.

### The Wildlife Sites Project (LWSP)

- ❖ Began in 1999 to develop and maintain a formalised Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) system for Warwickshire, made up of Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites as part of a wider initiative involving the LWS system operated in Coventry and Solihull; it is now part of the HBA Partnership.
- ❖ To designate sites following detailed site survey (Phase 2 habitat survey) and consultation with a panel of experts. To date there are a total of 543 LWSs, covering 6311ha 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.
- ❖ To ensure that all LWSs receive management guidance and have a full management plan, to monitor the success of the management plans on a biennial basis and to assess their current condition on a 5 year rolling programme.

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

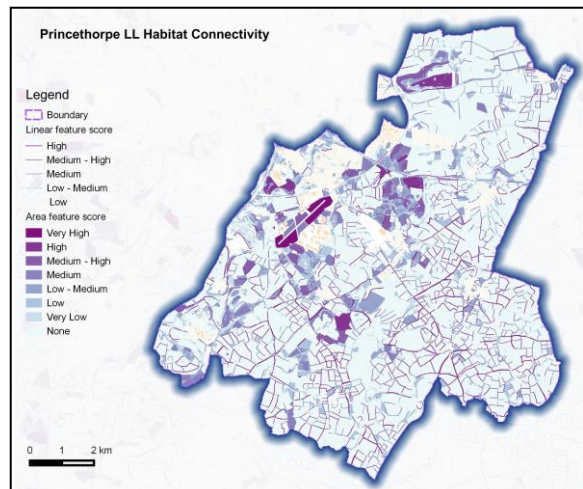
Its overall purposes are to:

- ❖ 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.



**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 80 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 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.**

