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Butterflies need you!

This is an appeal for volunteers to take part in the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) in North Wales. The WCBS is the main scheme for monitoring population changes of the UK's common and widespread butterflies. The survey is a partnership project run jointly by Butterfly Conservation, the British Trust for Ornithology and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

The scheme is vital to help assess whether nationwide conservation measures including agri-environment and woodland grant schemes are having a measureable impact in helping to conserve and restore butterfly populations across the countryside as a whole. The recently

published State of the UK's Butterflies 2011 report shows that as a group the wider countryside butterfly species have decline by 24% over the past ten years. We really need your help to substantially increase coverage.

All that is required is two core visits per year to an allocated 1km square (one in July and one in August) with an optional spring visit to count orange-tips and other early flying species. Depending upon the terrain one visit takes approximately an hour. If a square has not been surveyed previously you will need to obtain the landowner's permission (we provide you with a letter) and establish a transect



route (guidance available), which will increase the length of your first visit.

If you are interested in volunteering to take part in the WCBS please email the North Wales coordinator at amy.e.green@flintshire.gov.uk or phone on 01352 703263.



Don't miss out on 'The Big Dee Day—The Invasion' 28th & 29th June! Details inside this issue.

Ban on the sale of Aquatic invasive species

The UK government has announced that from April 2014 it is introducing a ban on the sale of five invasive non-native aquatic plants that have previously been on sale in garden centres. The species to be banned are water fern (*Azolla*), parrot's feather, floating pennywort,

water primrose and Australian swamp stonewort (*Crassula*). This ban should help curb the spread of these species which have already caused damage to aquatic habitats across the UK and cost millions of pounds a year to control.



© GB Non-Native Species Secretariat



The Invasion is here!



I'm sure that most of you are aware of the ongoing battle between conservationists and invasive non-native species in the UK, species such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, signal crayfish, American mink, giant hogweed and Chinese mitten crab. Following on from the hugely successful annual Big Dee Day river cleanup, this year we are having the first ever The Big Dee Day – The Invasion event, spanning the whole Dee catchment in Wales and England.

Our aim is to raise awareness of the problem of invasive non-native species

and how people can help, as well as raising the profile of recording systems such as Cofnod and Record by having some people taking part simply by recording where species are present. This will also help us to plan future control and map our progress.

The event is taking place over two days, 28 and 29 June this year with the aim of bringing together many separate events under the banner of the Big Dee Day – The Invasion. There will be a breakfast launches on the Friday followed by two days of recording and controlling these invasive species in the

Dee catchment. Members of the public and organisations are invited to come and join in. Local events will be advertised and your local Biodiversity Officer will also be able to inform you of events happening near you.

If you or your group would like to become involved in this event you can register an interest by visiting the Bionet webpage at www.bionetwales.co.uk and clicking on the link to send an email or getting in touch with your local Biodiversity Officer.

Live bat cam

Members of the public can now watch live pictures of a lesser horseshoe bat roost online. The roost at Bodidris Hall Hotel near Llandegla, is a 'maternity' or 'nursery' roost and is used by female bats to give birth and raise their young over the summer months. The stream can be accessed from the projects section of the Denbighshire biodiversity website, www.biodiversityindenbighshire.co.uk.

Female bats prefer warmer conditions to help the development of their young, whereas males prefer it slightly cooler, which helps to

conserve energy. Raising the young bats together in a group also has another advantage: babysitting! When the females go out to hunt at night, a few stay behind to look after the young bats before they are old enough to hunt for themselves.

The lesser horseshoe is one of the rarer species of bat in Britain. It is also one of the smallest, with a wingspan of 20-25cm. The diet consists of insects such as midges and small moths. Like all the British bats, they hunt using echolocation. However, lesser horseshoe bats are unusual in that the sound pulses are emitted through their nose instead of their mouth. Both greater and lesser horseshoe bats have a

complex horseshoe-shaped noseleaf which helps to direct the echolocation pulses.

In addition to the live stream, the footage is being recorded so that it can be analysed to study the bats' behaviour. It is hoped that this will increase our understanding of the species and help improve conservation measures to protect it.

If you are interested in learning more about bats, Denbighshire Countryside Service are running a number of bat walks and events over the summer. Visit www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk for the full events programme.



Conserving Swinchiard Brook

A number of years ago Flint Wildlife Education Group was formed with the purpose of managing and improving Swinchiard Brook, both for people who visit the site and for the wildlife that is resident there. The group was formed by local people who want to protect the green spaces of Flint.

This project is aimed at conserving, monitoring and recording species of flora and fauna in order to raise awareness of them, and ensure their existence for future generations. The brook is regarded as locally valuable as it is a semi-natural landscape within an urban setting. The site is a corridor containing a stream cutting through two industrial estates and its existence as a wildlife haven is invaluable. The brook that flows through the woodland is a subsidiary of the estuary. Many local residents are unaware of what is on their doorstep, and raising this

profile will benefit the whole community by bringing generations together.

The emphasis of the project is on monitoring what species are found in the local area, which will be recorded by local volunteers, schools and interest groups. The local Biodiversity Officer and Cofnod, the North Wales Records Centre have set up a simple recording system so that volunteers and participants can input data from the site. We will help people to input this data, so that they are encouraged to share the results of not only these surveys but also other wildlife that they spot when out with family and friends. The findings of these surveys will provide the basis for workshops with local schools and community groups, in order to raise awareness of protected species, highlight threats to these species, and therefore work to ensure they thrive in years to come.

TCV is the lead partner in the project and is being supported by Flintshire County Council's Biodiversity Team, Keep Wales Tidy, Flint Communities First, Cofnod, Clwyd Alyn Housing, Flint Wildlife Education Group, Next Steps Flintshire and the North Wales Wildlife Trust.

So far we have run the following ID courses at the brook: birds, bats, trees and butterflies; and we will soon be holding sessions in reptiles, amphibians, plants and insects. We have established good links with Cornist Park Primary School, who have been monitoring the bird population and installing nest boxes, and with Ysgol Maes Hyfryd Special School, who have started to construct an insect hotel. There is a warm welcome for interested local people to join these events, just contact Hywel Dodd on h.dodd@tcv.org.uk or 01978 366223.

Hywel Dodd, TCV

Biodiversity Action Recording System

Some of you may have heard about the Biodiversity Action Recording System (or BARS as it is more commonly known) it is to be found at www.ukbars.defra.gov.uk and is accessible to all! It is supported by DEFRA, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Environment Agency, the Wales Biodiversity Partnership and the

National Biodiversity Network Trust.

BARS is an online database-come-mapping system that illustrates practical biodiversity action that is in place to benefit important habitats and species as well as providing summaries of data. It is also used to report completed action. Anyone can register and use BARS to input actions and you need not be registered in order to view practical biodiversity action happening

anywhere.

To see what might be happening in your area or elsewhere simply visit the website and view the action maps or search using the toolbar in the top right hand corner.





MaMoNet Launch

No, not a new species unknown to science, a new, one-year project in Wales with a focus on gathering population data on hedgehog and harvest mouse!

The Mammal Monitoring Network (MaMoNet) Wales project aims to encourage citizen science to help gather more data on these two species. The data available suggest that both are in decline, in fact the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) reported a 50% decline of hedgehog over the last 25 years. With robust data however, a conservation strategy can be designed. This is where the fun starts!



Hedgehog tunnel

Footprints in the Ink

In order to gain data on the hedgehog population in Wales, we are asking people to place one of the Mammal Society's footprint tunnels along a linear route such as a hedge or wall during the summer months when hedgehogs are active. This can be in their garden or elsewhere as long as

landowner permission is granted. The tunnels need to be baited and as the hedgehog, or indeed other mammal, walks through the tunnel to get to the bait, they walk over some ink and their prints are then captured on a piece of paper as they walk out of the tunnel. A footprint ID chart is included with the tunnel kit to help participants correctly identify which mammals have been roaming in their garden at night. So simple that anyone, even people new to the world of mammals, can give it a go!

Tunnels can be purchased from The Mammal Society website via the **Survey Mammals** link alternatively, people can have a go at making their own following the **Assembly Instructions** on the website.

The tunnels can be used over and over again with just fresh bait and fresh paper being needed each time. From trials carried out for the tunnels, hedgehogs responded best to hotdogs!

We are then asking participants to upload their findings onto the

Mammal Society Atlas via the **Submit Records** link.



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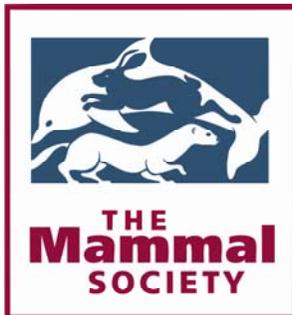
The National Mammal Atlas Project (NMAP) has now been running for over a year. The project aims to determine mammal distribution and abundance across the British Isles. This in turn will facilitate appropriate mammal conservation. So far, over 7,500 mammal records have now been submitted using the easy to use online form! Let's get some more records for Wales on there!

If however, participants do not have internet access or simply prefer a postal form, this is also possible. We just ask that the forms are



posted to us at the Mammal Society and we shall upload the data. Anyone who wishes to have a postal form can contact Becky – see below for contact details.

If you are planning on placing a tunnel do let Becky know. She is keen to keep up to date on where tunnels are being placed and how much effort people are going to. Drop her an email to let her know your plans!



The Hunt is on... ...for harvest mouse nests that is.

Working with the Mammals in a Sustainable Environment (MISE)¹ project, we aim to cover as many 1km² tetrads in Wales in our search for nests once the breeding season is over.

A similar survey took place in the 1970s and again in the 1990s so by ensuring those 1km² tetrads are monitored again, we will be able to compare data. We also hope that volunteers will be willing to take on new tetrads that have not been surveyed before.

We will be organising some training sessions later in the summer and then volunteers can survey their assigned tetrad(s).

If you wish to be included in a distribution list to receive further information on the harvest mouse surveys as it becomes available, please do get in touch and let me know.

Happy surveying!



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Contact: Rebecca Clews-Roberts,
Project Officer, MaMoNet Wales

r.clews-roberts@themammalsociety.org
07743 085 374

This is the first time that The Mammal Society have employed an officer in Wales and they are very grateful to Natural Resources Wales (formerly The Countryside Council for Wales) for helping to fund the project.

¹The Mammals in a Sustainable Environment Project (MISE) is a partnership between Natural Resources Wales, The Vincent Wildlife Trust and Snowdonia National Park Authority, in Wales; and Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford County Council and the National Biodiversity Data Centre in Ireland.

The project aims to monitor mammal species of conservation interest, with the help of novel genetic techniques, working with volunteers to raise awareness, and engage the public in mammal survey and conservation work. MISE is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Ireland Wales Programme (INTERREG 4A).



Saturday 8th June

Woodland DIY Day

2.00pm - 4pm

Bryn Euryn Local Nature Reserve, LL28 4TT

Booking Essential

Ring: 01492575541

Tuesday 11th June

Minibeasties!

10am—12pm @ Nant Mill

1pm - 3pm

Ring: 01978 752772

Little Tern Lowdown

11am - 12 noon @ Gronant

Viewing and update on the progress on this rare little tern nesting site.

Ring: 01352 810614

Wednesday 12th June

Biodiversity Speed Challenge

10am - 12pm

1pm - 3pm @ Alyn Waters

Ring: 01978 763140

Bug Hunting for Beginners

1:30pm - 3:30pm

Loggerheads Country Park

Ring: 01352 810614

Booking essential

Balsam Bash and Buffet

6pm - 9pm Caergwrle

Join us to launch another season of Himalayan balsam pulling in the Alyn valley. We'll start the evening with a Himalayan balsam pull and enjoy a buffet afterwards.

Ring: 01352 703263 to book

Thursday 13th June

Tremendous Trees

10am - 12pm

1pm - 3pm @ Bellevue

Ring: 01978 264150

Plants and Growing

10am - 12pm

1pm - 3pm @ Ty Mawr

Ring: 01978822780

Nightlife @ Nercwys

8:30pm - 11pm

Ring: 01352 810614

Friday 14th June

Wildlife Wonder

10am - 12pm

1pm - 3pm @ Ponciau Banks

Ring: 01978 844028

Taken at Swinchiard Brook



Wildflower Walk

3.30pm - 5.30pm @ Pontcysyllte

We'll be exploring the old railway line, canal and lane verges to see how many bees we can spot and which flowers they like.

Ring: 01352 810614

An evening at Fron farm

8:30pm-11:30pm

Join us for a stroll around the meadows and woodland of Fron Farm which has been managed sympathetically for wildlife, landscape, archaeology and access .

Bring a torch.

Booking essential.

Ring: 01352703263

Sunday 16th June

Wildlife Fun Day

11am - 4pm

Loggerheads Country Park

Ring: 01352 810614

Join the butterfly expedition

1.00pm

Mynydd Marian, Llysfaen

Booking Essential

Ring: 01492575547



Contact Us

Wrexham: emma.broad@wrexham.gov.uk

Tel: 01978 298762

Flintshire: amy.e.green@flintshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01352 703263

Denbighshire:

elizabeth.webster@denbighshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01824 708263

Conwy: anne.butler@conwy.gov.uk

Tel: 01492 575123

Follow Us!

Like our North East Wales Biodiversity Network page on Facebook to be updated on biodiversity action in Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. Regular posts are uploaded to the site informing you of exciting news, events, photos and projects in the area. It is a quick, simple and free way to discover what biodiversity activities are taking place and what you could be involved with in your county.

We also have a Twitter account which similarly to Facebook, updates you with regular tweets on interesting Bionet news, successes and events.

So follow us now at : Facebook: www.facebook.com/NEWBionet

Twitter: @newbionet



Summer Events

This is just a taster of the events available over summer, see our websites or contact your local biodiversity officer for information about more events.

Alyn Waters - Free Guided Orchid Walk

Wednesday 17th July

1:30pm - 3:30pm

All ages welcome, please ring: 01978763140

Children's Pond Dip - Halkyn Mountain Common

Wednesday 24th July

1.30pm - 3.30pm

Join the ranger to see what creatures live in one of the mountain ponds. Please wear wellies, dipping equipment will be provided.

Booking essential, please ring Wepre Park on 01244 814931

Discover the Denbigh Bats

Thursday 1st August

8:30pm - 10:30pm

Join us on a 3 mile walk around a Historic Town, Castle and Ancient Woodlands to discover which bats use the sites, detectors provided but please bring your own if you have one and a torch. Meet: Brookhouse Mill, Denbigh SJ071657. Booking essential, please ring: 01352 810614

Seaside Safari

Saturday 17th August

12:45pm - 2:30pm

Bring your children and enjoy exploring the wonderful rock pools of the north shore beach of Llandudno. We will help you to identify some of the incredible creatures here. You will need wellies, a waterproof and a container to show off your findings. Sorry, no dogs. Meet by the pier, North Parade, LL30 2LP. Booking essential, please ring: 01492 874151