

In the wild



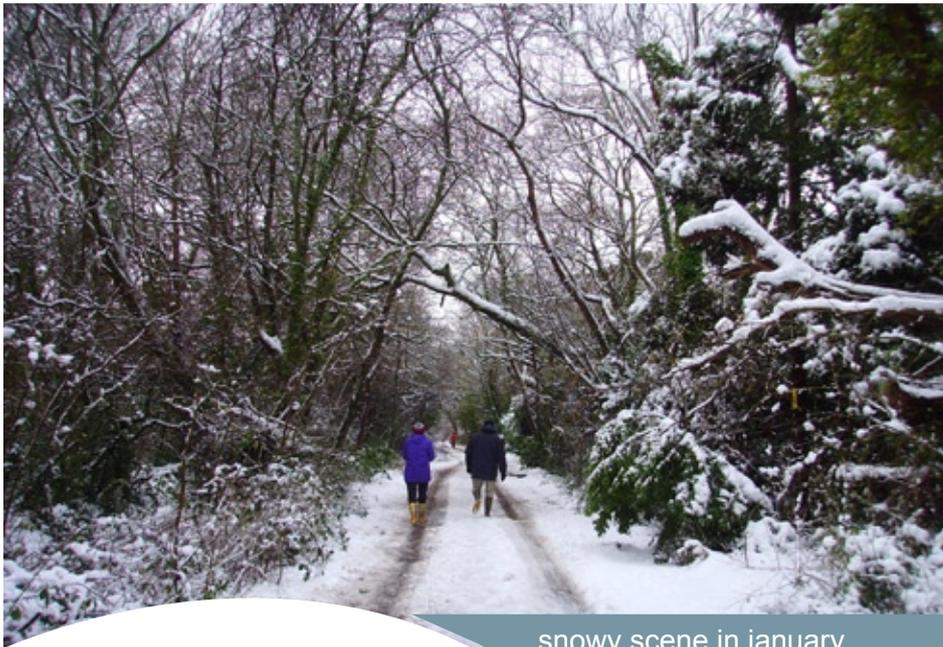
Newsletter number one

Feb 2010

Welcome to the first edition of *In the wild...*

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snowy scene in january

A warm welcome!

to the first edition of 'In the Wild' the new e-newsletter from the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership. We'll be sending it out twice a year and hope that it becomes an enjoyable way of keeping up with the latest wildlife news and projects across the Island.

We would love to hear from you if your organisation or business has been involved with a local project benefiting the community and biodiversity.

So, what's been happening...

2009 was a busy year for the Biodiversity Partnership as we celebrated our 10th anniversary.

Throughout 2009 we ran many events and activities which not only explored the Island's

wonderful wildlife, but also highlighted the work of Charles Darwin during his visits here as we supported the Darwin200 celebrations.

Back in September, we held our special birthday event at Brading Roman Villa where delegates from the Island and the South East region came together to celebrate the major achievements for biodiversity on the Isle of Wight during the last 10 years including local heritage, community involvement, land acquisition and education projects.

We also collaborated with IW Photographer of the Year Competition and supported a special category which celebrated the Island's unique wildlife.

Celebrating 10 years of the partnership



It's a very small world: go Wild on Wight



Bio bites



our objective

“The Island should be a place where plants, animals and habitats are conserved and enhanced both for their own sake and as an integral part of our quality of life.”



bio bites

Go Wild on Wight

If you've not seen it before, why not bookmark www.wildonwight.co.uk – the Island's Biodiversity website. Here you can find out about the Island's unique wildlife, the work of the Biodiversity Partnership, ideas for getting involved, things you can do and updates on the latest news and local events.



Wight in Bloom 2010

The Partnership will be supporting a special biodiversity award this year in the highly popular **Wight In Bloom** competition.

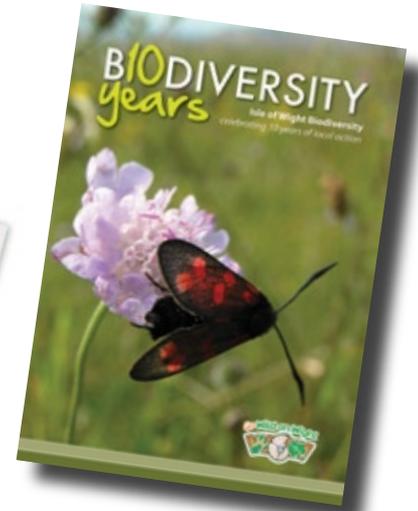
Entries will be judged according to their wildlife-friendliness.

Check local press for details in Spring for more information on how to enter your business or organisation.

Island seas are marine marvels

Recently Natural England has named the coastal waters around the Island as being among the **richest in the UK**.

In a list of 25 South East marinelife highlights the Island was featured no less than nine times!



10th anniversary of our Partnership

2009 was a milestone for the IW Biodiversity Partnership as we celebrated our 10th birthday. Much has been achieved in the last ten years to improve our natural environment for both wildlife and, the enjoyment of people who live here or visit the Island.

There have been many successes during this time. Here are some examples of which we can be proud and set the Island apart from other English counties.

Our chalk grassland, a habitat we know as the Downs, is rich in a variety of species. It is managed carefully in a traditional way by grazing with minimal or no use of fertilisers, and we now have more than 85% in favourable or recovering condition!

Our spectacular coastline supports a rich diversity of wildlife and geology, some of which are of national importance. Our soft cliffs have been recognised as some of the richest in the UK for their wildlife, and our shallow, sheltered sandy bays are host to some of the UK's most important underwater seagrass meadows – vital for young fish and seahorses.

The Island is home to 119 species of national importance with a further 477 identified as being locally distinctive. In fact, we have a handful of species which only exist on the Island, some of which are carefully monitored, others unfortunately not faring so well.

The pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly is one not doing so well. This little treasure is nationally threatened and is now confined to a tiny area in Parkhurst Forest. Ten years ago, it was widespread across the Forest but has since declined drastically due to a lack of suitable woodland management. However, a new work programme is currently underway, hopefully just in time to save this butterfly from extinction.

Looking back over the last ten years we can truly celebrate many successes in protecting plants, animals and the habitats they depend upon, but it is clear there is still much work to do. The Island's habitats and species are changing under pressure from both natural and human actions. The need for the IW Biodiversity Partnership is as strong now as it ever was and we will continue to work together to meet both the challenges ahead and to seek new opportunities in future.



Dragonfly - Gay Farmer
(main image)

Red Squirrel! -Stuart Shore
(top)

Male Barn Owl - Stuart
Blackley (above)

As part of the IW Biodiversity Partnership's 10th anniversary celebrations we supported the special category *'It's a very small world: go Wild on Wight'* in the 2009 Isle of Wight Photographer of the Year competition.

We asked the Island's photographers to get up-close to our unique wildlife and uncover some of nature's treasures.

Many congratulations to overall winner Gay Farmer with her spectacular image entitled 'Dragonfly'. Gay is an outdoor person who loves being in the countryside and has always been fascinated by nature & wildlife.

The winning shot was taken in her own garden in July last year. She said "It is quite unusual to see a dragonfly in my garden, so I rushed to get my camera to try and get a shot. Photography is relatively new to me but I am enjoying learning new ideas and techniques."

In second place was Stuart Shore with his iconic image entitled 'Red Squirrel!'. Stuart has been photographing the Island's wildlife for the past few years and has developed this into his own business Wight Wildlife Photography.

This shot was one in a collection of photographs taken in March last year at Alverstone Mead. Paul said "I had been trying to photograph squirrels in their natural environment. This squirrel kept running up and down a nearby tree, so I set the camera to focus on a section where it might take a quick look at me."

In third place was Paul Blackley with a captivating image entitled 'Male Barn Owl' taken in Spring last year in West Wight.

Paul has had an interest in photography since he was about 9 years old and has always been passionate about the Natural World, he also has his own business Wightlife Photography.

He dedicated hours to observing the owls, seeking the right shot and gradually noticed a change in the birds' routines. As the daylight hours lengthened with both the male and female often flying to a particular post to enjoy the final rays of the evening sunshine; Paul's perseverance certainly paid off!

The stunning winners and shortlisted entries will be on show at Freshwater Library during April and Newport Minster Church in May.



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International Year of Biodiversity

The UN has declared 2010 **International Year of Biodiversity** to celebrate the diversity of all life on Earth. IYB UK has over 200 partners supporting the campaign which includes our very own Biodiversity Partnership.

There will be many special events and activities during 2010 across the UK giving you a chance to learn about the rich variety of life around you, why biodiversity is important for wellbeing and ways you can get involved.

Look out for details of our special **Go Wild in the Woods** event on **June 2nd** with activities from dusk til' dawn taking you through a day in the life of Firestone Copse. More details coming soon on www.wildonwight.co.uk

Find out more about IYB UK at www.biodiversityislife.net



Biofact

Island Waters are **'shark central'** with nursery grounds for species such as tope, smoothhound, the rare porbeagle and the thresher. The truly 'electric' electric ray is also found here.

Contact us

If you would like find out more about the partnership or have a story you would like to share then please contact us on countryside@iow.gov.uk

Please do circulate this e-newsletter within your organisation and with other organisations you work with.