

In the wild

Newsletter number two

Autumn 2010

Welcome to Issue 2 of In the wild...



Autumnal scene at Firestone Copse

A warm welcome to...

...the second edition of 'In the Wild' the e-newsletter from the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership.

2010 has been a packed year for the Partnership as we have been involved in many events and initiatives celebrating International Year of Biodiversity alongside all the partners' usual habitat and species management work, landowner advice, community projects and guided walks.

Last month we collaborated with the IW AONB Partnership on a joint response to the proposed Environmental White Paper 'An Invitation to Shape the Nature of England' - through which we hope that we have represented

the views and needs of the Island in terms of the future of our natural environment.

In recent weeks we have also learned of the proposed budget cuts to environmental funding and agencies - it seems we will be facing challenging and uncertain times.

But we must focus on the ongoing good work of the partnership in conserving and enhancing the Island's biodiversity and celebrate recent successes such as winning an OPAL Biodiversity Champions award for our contributions towards International Year of Biodiversity 2010...read on to find out more!

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International Year of
Biodiversity events
round-up



Habitats & Species news



Bio bites



bio bites

Find us on Facebook

We now have our very own Facebook page so find us and become our friend!

On our page you'll see updates, news and forthcoming events.



Search for **wildonwight**.

We Are The Champions!

Last month we learned that the IW Biodiversity Partnership had been nominated for and had in fact successfully won a new accolade.

We've won an OPAL Biodiversity Champion 2010 award in recognition of the significant contribution we have made towards International Year of Biodiversity and for supporting the OPAL learning scheme.

The awards ceremony was held at the Natural History Museum in early November and our award was collected on our behalf by Bob Ford, from the Open University who joined us for 'Go Wild in the Woods' back in June and did a fantastic job running the species recording hub at the event.

Thanks and well done everybody!



IW Local Records Centre...

...is now up and running with its own dedicated section on the [Wild on Wight website](#).

The IWLRC's principle aim is to bring together information on the Island's wildlife, to make it available to all.



Our International Year of Biodiversity celebrations

Throughout 2010, the IW Biodiversity Partnership have led or been involved with many events across the Island helping celebrate International Year of Biodiversity.

As well as individual partners providing many guided walks and countryside activities exploring the Island's wonderful landscapes and wildlife, the Partnership came together in June for our special flagship event - 'Go Wild in the Woods'.

Activities such as guided wildlife walks, tree climbing, canoe and cycling safaris, bird box and feeder making to name a few were enjoyed by the 300 people who came along to the day.

The event also hosted the Island's very first BioBlitz where we aimed to record as many species as possible in the 24 hour period. Through the excellent spotting skills of the public, experts and scientists we achieved an amazing 447 species!

Later on in the Summer, we ran the Naturespot activity - a mini BioBlitz at the annual Fort Victoria Foray. Once again we asked for your help with recording all the wildlife encountered during the day

and we had another great tally of 358 species!

At each event a new species to the Island was discovered by Dr David Biggs - a new red and black myrid bug at Go Wild in the Woods and a new sawfly at the Fort Victoria Foray.

The Partnership also supported a special Wildlife Gardening Award in this year's popular Wight in Bloom competition. The Award was open across all categories and a Gold, Silver and Bronze prize were presented to the three best wildlife friendly gardens.

The Bronze was awarded to Afton Park Apple Farm demonstrating that businesses are doing their bit for biodiversity, the Silver to Vectis Road Allotments in East Cowes - a community allotment where plot holders work closely together and the Gold to Northwood Primary School - whose enthusiasm and commitment to their wildlife space truly impressed the judges.

A huge thanks to everybody who took part in these events and made them a great success, we hope you enjoyed them and we hope to run another BioBlitz event in 2011.



Top: removal of dense ash growth
Bottom: cleared area now flourishing

From Darkness to Light

The effects of countryside management can sometimes appear destructive and yet this is often necessary in the short term to achieve long term benefits for wildlife, and for the landscape of the Island to retain its character.

The ten year programme that the National Trust is carrying out on Tennyson Down is a successful example of landscape management. At first appearances it is not easy to see how cutting down trees can help wildlife but opening up the dense cover of young ash on the north side of the Down will let in light. The newly open areas will enable the special chalk grassland, which can be seen flourishing on the top of the Down, to seed and spread.

With time and the help of cattle grazing, herb rich grassland and associated butterflies and insects will flourish with larger trees and blocks of shrub being left to benefit birds. The wildlife isn't the only winner, people will be able to enjoy the open areas and improved views too!

Tony Tutton - Property Manager, National Trust

The Bees Knees - the Field of Hope

This summer many species of bee have been busy over at the Field of Hope in Newchurch.

This fabulous bee field forms a new Gift to Nature reserve and is home to many different mining and cuckoo bees throughout the year. The field is ideal because of the sandy nature of the soil, perfect for these mining bees which are usually solitary - it's literally buzzing with life.

Watch the amazing [video](#) depicting a veritable carpet of busy bees.

Why not come along to find out more and do your bit for the bees on a Gift to Nature Walk on March 13th 2011, more details [here](#).

An ivy mining bee by Ian Boyd



IW's Newest Nature Reserve

In October, after a successful fund raising campaign the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust launched their newest reserve on Knighton Down.

Kington Down is a valuable area of unimproved chalk grassland and woodland and already supports a wealth of distinctive wildlife such as grizzled skipper and chalkhill blue butterflies, skylarks and autumn gentians.

The site will provide an important stepping stone linking the nearby nature reserves of Eaglehead Copse, Arreton Down and Brading Down which support similar habitats and species.



bio bites

Celebrating West Wight Heathlands

Following on from the success of 'IW Heathlands Week' run by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust a new West Wight Heathlands Trails booklet has been launched.

The booklets give an insight into the fascinating natural and cultural heritage of three heathland sites in the West Wight with walks highlighting rare heathland wildlife.

Booklets are available from the Wildlife Trust Forest Office.



Funding News

The OPAL grants scheme for 2011 is offering up to £5000 of funding to help local wildlife groups and recording schemes to grow and flourish.

The scheme is open to all national and local natural history societies, recording schemes and similar groups that are active within England with a biological primary focus.

The theme is 'Sharing your skills' and OPAL aim to support projects that transfer knowledge and skills either between members of the group, or between the group and the wider community.

Deadline for applications is February 7th 2011. Find out more [here](#).



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More funding news...

The British Ecological Society's new Public Engagement Grant scheme is to provide support, up to £2000, to help its members and others to engage the public with exciting and important aspects of ecology.

The grants will support projects that:

- Raise public awareness of and engagement with ecology
- Inspire and enthuse people about ecology, especially those not previously interested in ecology
- Develop the communications skills of individuals involved

Find out more about the grants [here](#).

2011 Annual Recorder's Conference

The date of the 2011 IW Recorder's Conference is **Saturday 5th February** at Arreton Community Centre.

There are lots of fascinating talks and displays lined-up on the Island's wildlife and information on recording activities that have taken place during the past year.

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 countryside@iow.gov.uk.

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

IW Fruit Tree Survey - your help needed!

Since at least Roman times fruit trees have been an important feature in the Island's landscape. Whilst apples and other fruits are not thought to have been grown on a commercial basis, from medieval times most manor houses and farms would have had their own orchards.

Whilst many have now been lost to development, remnant orchards and trees can still be found in gardens and scrub across the Island.

The West Wight Landscape and

Stepping stones for stag beetles

People's Trust for Endangered Species have launched a new project on stag beetles.

Stag beetles (*Lucanus cervus*) are Britain's largest terrestrial beetle. Here on the Island, we hear of occasional sightings of stag beetles - so we know they are around.



Picture: Male stag beetle by Mrs Arnold

The reason they're not often seen is due to their long life cycle - their larvae live for up to seven years in decaying wood where they feed on the rotten timber. Our general tendency to tidy up the green spaces around us can threaten these vulnerable insects. As places for them to shelter are lost or become isolated, fewer suitable habitats for these insects exist.

Find out more [here](#) about stag beetles and how you can help.

and The People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) are now calling for volunteers to help undertake an inventory of these remnant orchards.

The aim of this work is to improve our understanding of these habitats and the species they support which in turn, will help us identify methods for their conservation.

Join in the survey [here](#).



Golden Hill improvements

Golden Hill has areas of heathland and grassland both important locally and nationally for the unique plant, butterfly and other insect species they support. Recently, habitat management work has begun to enhance and restore the rich wildlife and historic landscape of the site.

Large blocks of scrub and gorse are now encroaching on these special habitats and need to be reduced. Areas of scrub are being removed, but smaller blocks will be maintained to provide shelter for other species onsite.

A special project is also taking place on the western viewpoint which is being opened up so that the views of the downs and sea can once again be enjoyed. An information board will also be installed updating visitors of the management work that is being carried out.

Both projects are funded by West Wight Landscape Partnership as part of the West Wight Heathland Restoration scheme.



Pictures: left: Early gentian, right: Dingy skipper butterfly - both nationally important species that will benefit from the work.