

# Isle of Wight

## Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership

### Newsletter Number 1 October 1999

#### *Progress to date*

Since the launch meeting to form the **Partnership** in June 1999, nearly 50 organisations have responded and are listed on the back page. If your organisation, or others you are aware of, are not there, it's not too late to sign up. If you need extra forms, please contact the Countryside Section (Telephone 01983 823964)

A **Steering Group** to manage the process has been set up, and it met for the first time in the middle of September. Each of the members of this group has written a short introduction to their organisation and its role in the Isle of Wight BAP which is given here.

The plan is being progressed on several fronts. A small group drawn from the Steering Group is meeting to finalise the **Habitat Audit** - a description of the Island's resources in terms of extent and quality of habitat types. The Island is particularly important in regional and national terms for its soft cliffs, estuaries and chalk grasslands for example. This information will form the basis for the action to be agreed for the management of both habitats and the species they contain.

The **database of species** is being compiled with the assistance of the Island's many local experts in natural history and approaching 400 species records have been entered to date.

#### **Please circulate within your organisation**

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The emphasis needs to be on a Biodiversity **Action Plan**. Recently, several organisations co-operated in carrying out a study of one of the Island's rarities - Wood calamint - which we hope will set a pattern for the joint ventures which the BAP will require. Details are given on the back page.

## **Introducing the Steering Group**

### **Country Landowners' Association**

The C L A has had considerable experience both locally and nationally in biodiversity action plans, and in recommending their implications to its members.

*David Langford* Regional Director Country Landowners Association

The **Environment Agency** is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment through all its activities, as described in the Isle of Wight Local Environment Agency Plan, published in March 1999. The Agency will support all aspects of the Island's BAP planning process, by taking the lead in producing some plans, providing data and expertise, and contributing towards the production costs. Once the plan is published, the Agency will actively fulfil its responsibilities to deliver the aims, actions and targets set by the BAP. Making a difference on the ground is what counts.

*Tim Sykes* Conservation and Recreation Team Leader

**English Nature** promotes the conservation of England's wildlife, and it is a statutory body funded by DETR. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan is a key national initiative that drives its work, and it has direct responsibility for a number of species and habitat action plans, as well as giving a high priority to working with others to help in the achievement of local targets. The Island has an important contribution to make to national biodiversity targets, and through this Steering Group, it can assist action on the ground for the Island's wildlife.

*Claire Lambert* Conservation Officer

### **Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust**

is one of 47 Trusts across the UK which are collectively known as The Wildlife Trusts. It is an independent charity working to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the two counties. The Trust can bring much valuable experience in terms of Biodiversity Action Planning. It has been heavily involved in the Hampshire BAP; over the last 18 months, Debbie Wicks has taken on specific responsibility for co-ordinating the species element, both data collation and action plans. As part of this role, she liaises with various national BAP steering groups for those species for which Hampshire has nationally important populations. Previously, she worked for the Surrey Wildlife Trust, co-ordinating their BAP.

*Debbie Wicks* Conservation Officer

**Wight Wildlife** is a partnership between the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society, established to promote wildlife conservation on the Island. It is actively involved in a variety of habitat and species management projects and has experienced staff in the field. It is able to tap into the expertise of most of the Island's amateur naturalists to provide the up-to-date information required to take the process forward. Wight Wildlife also aims to raise public awareness regarding wildlife conservation, and can help by involving the Island's community in projects arising from the Plan.

*Richard Grogan* Wight Wildlife Officer

The **Isle of Wight Council's** strategic planning policies call for the sustainable development of the Island, in line with the principles of Agenda 21. Biodiversity is a vital component of our natural resource and the Council will give a high priority to both the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan and its implementation.

**Paul Airey** Policy and Environment Manager

The brief of the **National Farmers' Union** in supporting the development of the Island's Biodiversity Action Plan is to ensure that it takes account of the need for a commercially viable rural economy. The Government and the public generally should appreciate the need for farmers and growers, be they tenants or owner occupiers, to be properly funded if they are to maintain the countryside to best advantage.

**Peter Keevil** County Secretary Isle of Wight Branch National Farmers' Union

The **National Trust** owns and manages some of the most important wildlife sites on the Isle of Wight, including Newtown National Nature Reserve and the West Wight Downs. It is pleased to contribute its extensive management expertise to the Biodiversity Action Plan process.

**Tony Tutton** Property Manager

**RSPB**

**Sarah Dawkins** Conservation Officer

## **Biodiversity in Action**

Wood calamint is one of our specialities, and its Island site is the only one known in Britain. It is on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan long list of globally threatened/declining species. The IW Natural History and Archaeological Society have had conservation working parties at the site since 1959. At this time, the population had declined to near-extinction. Each winter, plants such as bramble and hemp agrimony, which otherwise might out-compete it, are cut back. The species has shown a marked recovery, although it has never reached the "greatest profusion" noted by Bromfield.

During September, a working group from the Society, Wight Wildlife, Medina Valley Centre and the Isle of Wight Council made a detailed survey of the plant's distribution, and assessed its growth. The findings were quite encouraging as the plant has now been found in places further away from its previously known site. The knowledge gained from this study will lead to management recommendations which, when implemented, aim to secure the present population, and encourage its continued spread. English Nature have assisted Wight Wildlife in obtaining funding to carry out this project.

## **Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership (to 5th October 1999)**

BTCV

Bardon Vectis

Bembridge and St Helens Harbour Society

Branstone Farm Studies Centre

British Entomological & Natural History Society

Country Landowners Association

Diocese of Portsmouth C of E

English Heritage

English Nature

Environment Agency

Environment Agency IW Area Group

Environment Concern

F R C A

Forest Enterprise

Forestry Commission

Hampshire & IW Wildlife Trust

Highfield Farming Consultancy

Horticultural Association

I W Centre for Coastal Environment

I W Natural History & Archaeological Society

IW Badger Group

IW Centre for the Coastal Environment

IW Estuaries Steering Committee

IW Freshwater Angling Association

IW Rural Community Council

IW Sports Council

Island 2000

Island Waste Services

Isle of Wight Council

Isle of Wight Ornithological Group

Isle of Wight Partnership

Medina Valley Centre

National Farmers' Union

National Trust

Ornithological Breaks

Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species

Plantlife

Practical Habitat Management

RSPB

Ramblers' Association

Sam Biles Chartered Surveyors

Solent Protection Society

Sustainable Tourism Forum

Ventnor Botanic Garden

Western Yar Action Group

Wight Green Centre

Wight Leisure

Wight Nature Fund

Wight Salads

Wight Wildlife

Woodland Trust

Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners