



Beds BioNews



BedsLife
Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership



Bedfordshire Woodlands in a changing climate

By John Comont

Young saplings in our woods today will have to cope with living in a very different climate by the time they are mature trees. Just what the climate changes will be and their possible impacts on our trees and woodlands was the subject of a workshop organised by the East England Conservancy of the Forestry Commission earlier this summer. Experts from Forest Research and English Nature described the latest research and described very mixed fortunes for our woodlands.

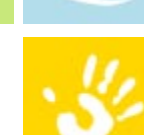


Marston Thrift in May 2005. What will it look like in 2105?
Photo by John Comont

Mean annual temperatures are expected to continue to rise and there will be substantially less rainfall in summer but more in winter. Extreme weather events are likely to be more frequent with storms in winter and prolonged droughts in summer. In recent decades forest fires have been associated with droughts and may well become more frequent. Growing seasons will be longer and higher carbon dioxide levels should increase growth rates but, surprisingly, to date, there has been no appreciable change in the date of the last spring frosts resulting in more frost damage of young shoots and holding back growth.

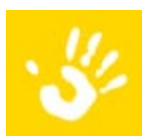
All was not gloom and despondency however. Our trees have relatively wide tolerance and many species will cope with the changes. Some species such as ash, holly and hornbeam are likely to thrive. Losers may be beech on thin droughty soils and sycamore which may be plagued by sooty bark disease. Many commercial conifer species may struggle but Corsican pine should do well. This ties rather closely to climate modelling which cautiously predicted a climate in eastern England in 2080 similar to that of south-east Italy today!

A key message for woodland managers was that the character and composition of our native woodland is likely to change with new species assemblages developing. Management should recognise this and managers need to be alert and flexible enough to respond as changes occur. Expanding and linking woods to provide more opportunity for species migration and survival within appropriate woodland niches should be an important objective of future woodland policy.



Beds BioNews is the newsletter of BedsLife, the Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership.

Please submit any articles, events or notices to heather.webb@bedscc.gov.uk.





Another dragonfly first for Beds

The red veined darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*) has joined the downy emerald as a new dragonfly species for Bedfordshire. Three were seen in June at the Marston Vale Forest Centre. This relatively rare migrant to Britain has been seen increasingly in recent years. It is believed to have bred here as early as 1940, and has been seen annually since 1995. This little guy, though, is a first for our county!



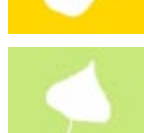
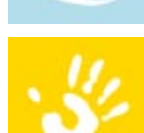
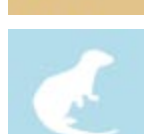
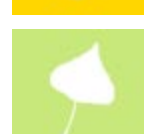
The red veined darter at Marston Vale. Photo by Brian Sawford.



New UK BAP targets on the way

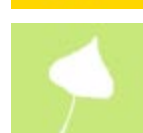
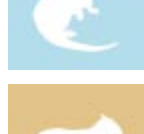
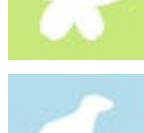
The much-anticipated revised UK habitat targets are expected to be released in November, after ministerial sign-off. On November 2 the update on the England Biodiversity Strategy will be launched, and will include high-level target summaries for the habitats. The new targets will hopefully follow soon after.

The new suite of national targets will be more structured than the existing ones. For each habitat, targets will be set for creation, achieving condition, restoration and maintenance. Some guidance is already available on the meanings of these terms, which should make things much easier come reporting time! Species targets aren't expected for a while yet. However initial indications are that species targets will be focused on maintaining and expanding range and population size. Again, some guidance is already available on how these will likely be measured. For more information on the UK BAP review visit the national BAP website at www.ukbap.org.uk and click on the "Library" link at the top of the page.



The dormouse group surges ahead!

The Bedfordshire Dormouse Group is already well into a review of our local dormouse action plan. The targets are being structured like the new national species targets, focusing on measurable parameters like range and population size. Each target will have actions to implement it, and each action in the plan will pertain to at least one target. In essence, the new plan will be a "lean, mean, dormouse conservation machine"! We hope it will provide a model for groups undertaking or advising on other species action plan reviews.





Nature nuggets:

National Tree Week is Nov. 22 – Dec. 3 this year. This is the UK’s largest celebration of trees and naturally marks the beginning of tree planting season. Local tree wardens will be working with their communities to plant trees around the country. For tree planting tips and more information visit the Tree Council website at www.treecouncil.org.uk. To find out who your local tree warden is, contact your parish council.

Breathing Places is a new BBC campaign for the public to get involved in creating new open spaces. The BBC has teamed up with Big Lottery Fund to provide grants of up to £10,000 for community projects. Constituted groups including schools, parish councils and other organisations are eligible to apply. For more information check out the Breathing Places website: www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces.

It was great to see a few of Bedfordshire’s **parish tree wardens** out at the East Anglia Tree Warden event in Bluntisham on September 24. This year’s theme was traditional orchards. Those who weren’t able to attend missed a great day of talks and field trips. **Many thanks to the folks at the Tree Council and Huntingdon District Council** for organising such a great event!

The fieldwork for the **Studham parish hedgerow survey** is pretty much done now. Many thanks to our volunteers (and “volun-tolds”!) who withstood the sun, rain, heat and cold all in the name of research. And **huge thanks to Studham’s landowners** who so kindly let us trudge through their fields to look at their hedges. Finally, a special mention goes to the staff at the Red Lion for bearing with us grubby surveyors leaving clumps of dirt on your nice carpets! Survey results will be available and on the new BedsLife website in December.

New publications:

Heritage Trees of Scotland (hardback) has just been released by the Tree Council. This companion book to *Heritage Trees of Britain & Northern Ireland* can be ordered from the Council at www.treecouncil.org.uk.

A number of new publications are available from the Deer Initiative. These include advice on culling deer out of season, deer management and Lyme disease, and legal requirements for deer larders and the disposal of by-products. Copies can be ordered by sending an email to admin@thedeerinitiative.co.uk.

Events:

Oct 1: At 18:00 **ITV’s “Secret Rivers” programme will feature the River Ivel**. Get a close up look from the comfort of your home!





Oct. 5, 6: The Forestry Commission is hosting a 2-day programme of events. **Ancient Woodland: Restoration in Practice** includes a workshop on October 5 for woodland practitioners, and an open day of demonstrations on October 6 for anyone interested in how the Forestry Commission restores and manages woodlands. For more information contact Hugh Mannall at hugh.mannall@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

Oct. 10: The Grazing Animals Project (GAP) and the RSPB will be holding a **field meeting at Ouse Washes Nature Reserve** in Cambridgeshire. This will be an opportunity to see some of the 45 herds of cattle and horses grazing the wetland and have a look at the sward, grazing regime and various other techniques employed for managing the wetland for birds. Places are free but you must book in advance; for more information contact Adam Cormack at enquiries@grazinganimalsproject.info or 01636 670095.

Oct. 12-13: The Eden Project will be hosting **One Step Beyond: Ecological Restoration and the United Kingdom**. Only 60 spots are available for this event being held in Bodelva, Cornwall. The conference fee is £35; for more information and accommodation suggestions please contact Fiona Tooke at ftooke@edenproject.com or 01726 818770.

Oct. 15 is **Apple Day at Bromham Mill, Bedford**, from 11am to 4.30pm. Come sample the tastes of autumn, have someone identify your apples or just enjoy a great day out. Admission is £4. For more information contact Rosemary Barret at 01234 824330 or bromham.mill@bedscc.gov.uk.

Oct. 24: The Carbon Trust is holding two free half-day energy management workshops in Bedford. At the morning session, **Introduction to energy management** learn how to analyse your energy bill, raise staff awareness on energy efficiency, and find simple no cost and low cost ways to reduce energy costs. In the afternoon, **Intermediate energy management** will cover topics such as monitoring energy consumption, metering and monitoring techniques and reporting and maintaining energy saving initiatives. To register go to www.carbontrust.co.uk/events or call 0800 085 2005.

Nov. 18: The Suffolk Bat Group will be hosting the **East Anglian Region Bat Conference** at the Needham Market Community Centre. Places must be booked in advance and the cost of £10 includes lunch. The flyer/booking form can be obtained from Mary Norden, Suffolk Biodiversity Coordinator, at mary.norden@suffolkcc.gov.uk.

Mar. 23-24, 2007: The Deer Initiative will be hosting **Deer, habitats and impacts**, a conference at the Palace Hotel Buxton. Stay tuned to their website (www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk) or keep an eye on future issues of *In Leaf*, the Anglian Woodland Project newsletter. For copies of the newsletter contact Gary Battell at gary.battell@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk.

