



Beds BioNews



BedsLife
Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership



It's back!

This edition marks the return of Beds BioNews, your source of biodiversity news and information for Bedfordshire and Luton. It's a new year and so we have new staff, a new look, and a new name for the partnership. But not everything has changed: as before, we encourage and welcome news from around the county. This is a chance for you, the nature and biodiversity community, to share your stories, ask questions and find out what's going on with the county's spaces and species. So feel free to send in any articles for Beds BioNews to heather.webb@bedscc.gov.uk.

A new face around the county

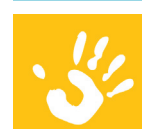
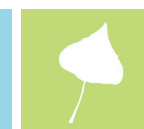
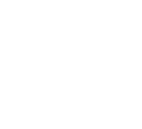
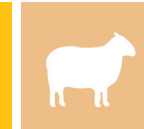
Hi everyone! My name is Heather Webb and I'm the new Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator for Beds & Luton. I'm from Canada, and arrived in the UK in November. My last job was with Ontario Nature, a federation of 140 naturalist clubs, and before that I worked for the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. In addition to my work for the Partnership, I'm also doing my M.Sc. in biodiversity conservation and management at Imperial College, London. My hobbies (when I get a break from school that is!) are photography and sea kayaking, so I was glad to find a kayak club here in Bedford! I've already met quite a few people in my five months here but hope to meet many more of you in the near future. I've put a picture in here so you can put a face to my name, so if you see me out and about please introduce yourself!

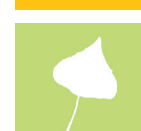


Another new face (sort of)! New insect recorded for Britain

A recent survey of the insects of Sandy Heath Quarry has found a new species for Britain. The spider-hunting wasp *Episyron gallicum* is a rare Mediterranean species that has expanded its range and is now found in Poland and Germany. This wasp prefers grazed habitat, and has declined in areas where reforestation has taken place. *E. gallicum* hunts orb-building spiders and builds its nest in loose sand, making the quarry environment ideal for this new arrival.

Two other significant insect species were found during the study. The larvae of the poorly known robber fly *Machimus arthriticus* hunt other invertebrates living in the sandy quarry soil. The rare digger wasp *Cerceris quinquefasciata* hunts weevil larvae and is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species. Although historically found in 49 ten km squares in southern England, since 1980 it has only been found in 14 squares.





All about: Green Infrastructure

We've been hearing for a long time now how linking habitats is good for wildlife. Just as we humans depend on roads to visit family and bring food from farms and timber to build houses, many species use habitat "corridors" to search for mates, food and other resources.

Green Infrastructure (GI) takes this concept a step further. Central to the concept of GI is *multi-functionality*, the ability of greenspace to meet the needs of nature *and* people. Green Infrastructure refers to a network of public and private greenspaces in both urban and rural environments. These greenspaces consist of areas for biodiversity, landscape value, heritage, public access and recreation, and linked together can provide a robust green network.

In February the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced £1.6 million in funding for wildlife habitats and improved public access in the Luton-Dunstable area. The "Chalk Arc" green infrastructure project will build on existing green spaces through a combination of land purchase, site enhancement and access route creation. This is good news for Luton, and good news for Luton's wildlife!

Upcoming events

May 22 is World Biodiversity Day!

May 30 – June 2 is Europe Green Week 2006 and this year's theme is biodiversity! Consider attending the Europe Green Week Conference in Brussels: details are available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/home.html>.

June 3: The BBC's "Springwatch" is coming to Bedfordshire! Stay tuned to the BBC website (www.bbc.co.uk) for information and updates.

June 14 – 16: Innovation in Urban Biodiversity Conference, hosted by the Sustainable Urban Networks for Green Spaces (SUN) Partnership, will be held at the London Wetland Centre. For information and/or registration please contact Aimee Jones at aimee.jones@sutton.gov.uk.

Don't forget, this year marks the Bedfordshire Natural History Society's 60th anniversary! Check out their website for a list of "Diamond Anniversary" events: www.bnhs.org.uk.

Got a special event coming up? Email Heather with the details to get your event into the next Beds BioNews:

heather.webb@bedscc.gov.uk.

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