



Now to wrap up the loose ends. Having been flattened our bug struggled for a few hours in the plastic cup in which we'd placed it, and ultimately succumbed to its injuries. It was then unceremoniously dumped in the bin.

Hot off the press

Two of the county's nature groups were hard at work this summer and autumn, updating a couple of our publications. The Bedfordshire Dormouse Group (BDG) and the Bedfordshire Bird Club have been – pardon the pun – beavering away at a new Dormouse Action Plan and birds chapter of the local Red Data Book, respectively.



Hazel dormouse, *Muscardinus avellanarius*.
Photo by Bjorn Schulz

The old Dormouse Action Plan has been greatly streamlined. New national species targets are focussed on maintaining and expanding the range of the hazel dormouse, *Muscardinus avellanarius*. The BDG have led the way in establishing similar targets for Bedfordshire and Luton. This will make it much easier for us to report on and evaluate our progress.

It must be mentioned that the BDG's dedication apparently knows no bounds. Work on the new action plan began at a meeting held during England's World Cup quarter-final game against Portugal!

Also hard at work was the Bedfordshire Bird Club, who updated the bird chapter of the county Red Data Book (RDB). The RDB is a list of the county's species of conservation concern. It includes species on the national RDB red and amber lists, and those of concern locally, and indicates any European status each species may have. The RDB is therefore a "one stop shop" for those who want to find out about Bedfordshire's important wildlife.



Yellowhammer, *Emberiza citronella*, a national Red List species. Photo by Andreas Trepte, Marburg

The new Hazel Dormouse Action Plan and Red Data Book chapter are available on the BedsLife website. Many, many thanks to the Bedfordshire Dormouse Group and the Bedfordshire Bird Club for their hard work!

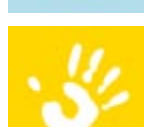
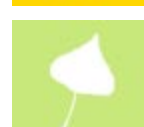
Is "green" the new black?

"The way to go: pay as you go cars"

"Recycling, sharing and cheeky swapping: it's the new consumerism"

"Take to country life in an eco-friendly fashion"

Wishful thinking? Friends of the Earth campaign slogans? In fact, these are headlines from a supplement to the December 2006 issue of *Vogue* magazine. It appears that even off the catwalk, green may well indeed be the new black!





Vogue is the women's guide to beauty, luxury and style. Its glossy pages are rife with photos of beautiful men and women perfectly coiffed and attired. It advertises Hermès purses, Prada gowns and Bulgari jewellery. It is the last word in chic.

While December's supplement contained the usual fashion and lifestyle articles, it also included quite a few articles on "green" trends. Featured within its pages were pieces on gardening with drought-tolerant plants ("a smart and chic option"), ethical shopping ("add[s] to the case for guilt-free shopping sprees") and butterfly spotting ("the perfect excuse to get back to nature, and all in the nicest possible way").

All this begs the question: is "green" the new black?

Possibly. Patrick Worms of Aspect Public Relations says the best way to get people to engage in environmental issues is to "make acting now the 'in-thing' to do". At last year's Europe Green Week in Brussels, Worms told a standing-room-only audience that "an experience which is memorable enough will break through the consumer's control and create buzz...people will keep on talking." He advised us to make nature-friendly behaviour "exclusive and desirable". He illustrated this concept with the example of the iPod™ portable music player. Funky ads highlight iPod's trademark white earphones worn by vibrant young dancers. "These ads make the iPod appear exclusive", he told us. "But think about it: *everybody* has one!"

So something needn't be expensive to be exclusive. Nor does it need to be rare. Our mission is to make environmentalism "the" thing to do. Is green the new black? It's up to us to make sure that it is.



Photo by Camila Martins

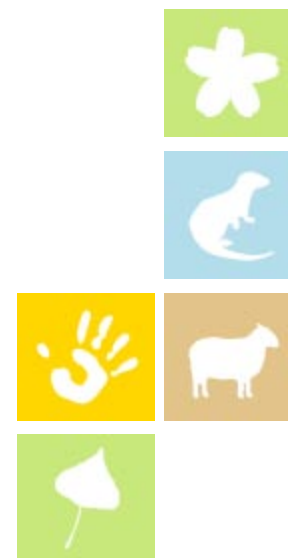
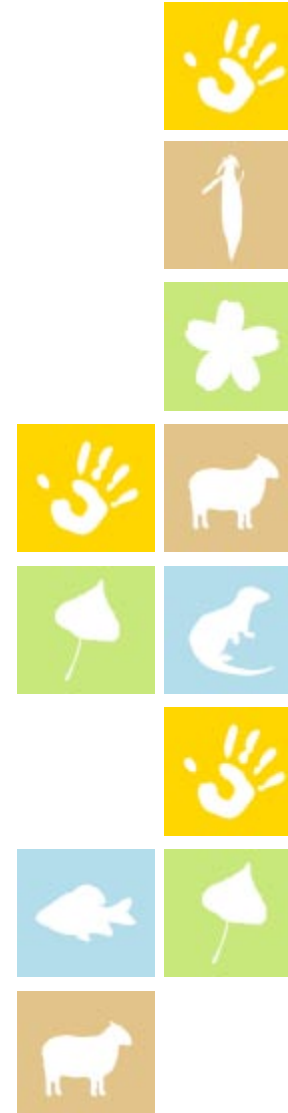
Nature Nuggets:

The report of the **Studham parish hedgerow survey** is now available on the BedsLife website. Over half of the hedgerows in the parish were found to be species-rich! The Bedfordshire Dormouse Group will be looking at the results to determine where hedgerow restoration would most benefit Studham's dormouse population.

The Grassland Trust are looking for information to steer their work. If you currently manage grasslands and can spare a bit of time to complete a questionnaire, they would like to hear from you. They are particularly interested in the management of small, isolated sites. For more information or a copy of the questionnaire please contact the Trust directly at 07950 564528 or leave a message at 01489 605729.

New publications:

"Nature After Minerals: how mineral site restoration can benefit people and wildlife" is a new report by the RSPB. It describes how targeted habitat creation on minerals sites across England could make a huge and cost effective contribution to UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets. The report can be downloaded as a pdf from www.afterminerals.com.





LIFE in the City: Innovative solutions for Europe's urban environment is the latest report in the LIFE-focus series. This edition looks at urban projects co-financed by the EU's LIFE programme. The 24 projects covered have tested and validated innovative approaches that are both effective and widely applicable. The report can be downloaded from ec.europa.eu/environment/life/infoproducts/urban/urban_lr.pdf.

Events:

Jan. 26: The **Chilterns Woodland Forum** will take place at Green Park, Aston Clinton, Bucks. The theme for this year's conference is "Growing timber and wood fuel in the Chilterns". Cost is £20 per person and includes lunch. Booking is essential: please call 01844 355503.

Jan 27-28: The Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK will be hosting next year's **Herpetofauna Workers' Meeting** at Butts Park Arena in Coventry. Lectures and workshops will cover topics such as habitat management and the impact of climate change on herpetiles. For more information please visit the ARG website at www.arg-uk.org.uk.

Feb 23: A **Chilterns Wildlife Conference** will be held at the Green Park Conference Centre, Aston Clinton, near Tring. The conference will focus on the Wildlife of the Chilterns Natural Area, and will identify current concerns and conservation needs, and explore the opportunities for habitat network development. To register your interest or obtain more information contact Donna Hunter at dhunter@chilternsaonb.org, or 01844 355504.

Jun 24-30: The **10th European Heathland Workshop** will take place in central and northern Norway. The theme for this year is "Threats, Management and Conservation". Numbers are limited so register soon! To register please contact Mons Kvamme at the University of Bergen: +47 92 03 24 47. More information on the conference is available online at www.heathlands2007.uib.no/.

Jul 27-29, 2007: The Mid-Derbyshire Badger Group will be hosting the **2007 Badger Trust Annual Conference** in Swanwick, Derbyshire. *Book early: the deadline for registrations is Friday February 16, 2007.* For more information please contact Dorothy Evans at 07759 924259 or derbyshireconference@tiscali.co.uk.

Sept 5-7: The Wessex Institute of Technology will be holding the **Sixth International Conference on Ecosystems and Sustainable Development** in Coimbra, Portugal. The aim of the conference is to encourage and facilitate communication between scientists, engineers and professionals working in ecological systems and sustainable development. For more information visit www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2007/eco07/index.html.



If you've got something to sing about, don't keep it to yourself! Email me at heather.webb@bedscc.gov.uk to get your news or events into the next Beds BioNews or on the BedsLife website!

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