



Beds BioNews



BedsLife
Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership

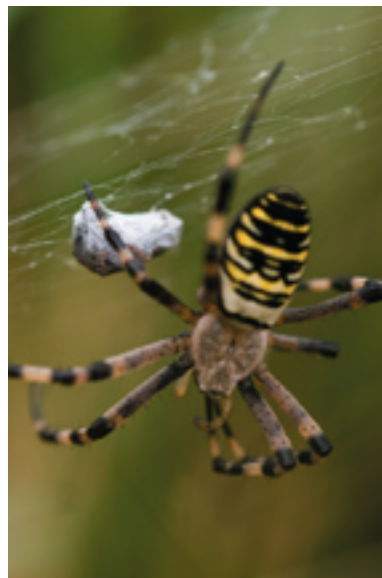


Sandy Heath Quarry: an important site for invertebrates

A new survey has confirmed what many have suspected for a while now: Sandy Heath Quarry is an important site for insects and other invertebrates. Buglife has found that over 10% of invertebrate species found at the site are rare or scarce.

New discoveries included 32 beetle species new to Bedfordshire! One of these was the rare rove-beetle *Aleochara binotata*. A male and five females were found hiding out under some fox dung. This is only the 7th British record for the species, an exciting find indeed! Also found were the wasp spider *Argiope bruennichi*, previously only found at Bromham Quarry, and the bee wolf *Philanthus triangulum*. The quarry is also the only known British site for the spider-hunting wasp *Episyron gallicum*.

With so many rarities Sandy Heath Quarry may very well be regionally important for invertebrates. We look forward to hearing about more new arrivals as the site continues to mature.



Argiope bruennichi. Photo by Clifton Beard



World Conservation Congress – Barcelona – October 2008

John Comont, Bedfordshire County Council

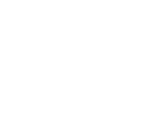
The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) works worldwide to develop conservation science, law and policy and works to empower communities. Globalisation is affecting us all in many ways and wildlife conservation is no exception. Every four years IUCN organises an international conference and this year, for the first time, it was hosted in Europe. A four day Forum at the start of the conference drew together over 7000 participants from around the world to share experience and learn. Themes this year included protected sites and species, business and environment,

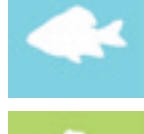
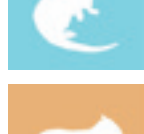
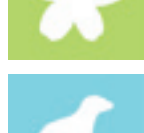
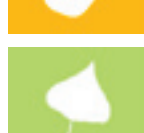
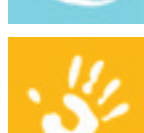


A Congress workshop. Photo by Heather Webb

communities and biodiversity and of course climate change.

A vast number of presentations, seminars, workshops and posters were nothing short of inspirational. It was encouraging to see how well we are doing at recording and studying Bedfordshire wildlife and clearly some of the work of volunteers and the local record centre would be the envy of many countries. Habitat and species conservation was of course widely discussed and some of the effort and commitment that communities with very little material wealth put into protecting





the environment within which they make their livelihoods was very humbling.

Adaptation to climate change was a major theme. Major efforts are being made around the world to expand, buffer and link together habitat patches. Many of these efforts are directly analogous to Parish, District, County and Regional green infrastructure work that has taken off here in recent years. Of course the scale is different but we can learn from both the successes and pitfalls of different approaches.

I've always been sceptical about the value of big international environment jamborees but this Conservation Congress Forum was inspirational. No amount of reading or television can substitute for conversations with people who are actually making changes around the world. You will need to wait another four years for the next Congress but, if you get the chance, go, and give your enthusiasm a boost.



The Species Pavilion - where the IUCN launched their new Red List, provided a place for delegates to take a break during the busy Congress. Photo by Heather Webb

Countryside Survey 2007: the results are in!

Have you noticed your favourite woodland becoming swamped with stinging nettles or a meadow dominated by tall grass where once it was a short flower filled sward? If so you are not alone. The UK Countryside Survey has been taking a snapshot of trends at various intervals since 1978. Area of woodland has increased, river water quality improved and acid rain reduced but for many habitats condition and species richness seems to be continuing to deteriorate. Visit www.countrysidesurvey.org.uk for a picture of the losses and gains of the last 30 years.

A great game of musical chairs!

Normally we report on the various comings and goings among our many BedsLife partners. This time though, we've got folks shuffling around the county! After a long and distinguished time with Beds County Council, County Ecologist John Comont is returning to his old stomping grounds at the Wildlife Trust. He'll be the new Senior Conservation Officer, so Graham Bellamy can now spend his time looking after his beloved nature reserves as the new Reserves Manager. And joining them in what is bound to be a very crowded office is Katharine Banham, who is leaving the Record Centre and joining the Wildlife Trust gang. Congratulations everyone, and have fun in your new roles!

Nature nuggets

The Nude Ewe project has been invited to participate in **Woolfest 2009**. This is *the* event for knitters and spinners, and gives us a great chance to spread





the message about grassland conservation while making money for local graziers. Woolfest takes place June 26-27 in Cockermouth, Cumbria. If you love all things sheepy and fancy a trip to the Lakes, do join us! www.woolfest.co.uk



Congratulations to the Wildlife Trust and Greensand Trust, both of which received grants from Natural England's **Countdown 2010 Fund!** During the next few years over £240,000 will be spent restoring and protecting Bedfordshire's grassland and heathland habitats. Well done to both organisations!



And speaking of money, The Wildlife Trust has also secured £31,000 from the Harpur Trust for the **Randalls Farm Environmental Education Centre** near Stewartby. The money will go towards helping more than 3000 children connect with nature through the Really Wild Days Out programme.



In even *more* money news, congratulations to the **successful applicants to the GrantScope Local Nature Challenge for Bedfordshire**. One hundred thousand pounds is being awarded to FWAG, the Greensand Trust, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, the Woodland Trust, the National Trust, BTCV and Heath and Reach Parish Council, all for local habitat creation and restoration initiatives.



Also in *Nude Ewe* news, we are pleased to announce the arrival of **'Wes', our lovely white Wensleydale wool!** This soft lustrous wool comes from a flock of Wensleydale sheep that graze a traditional orchard in Edlesborough. Sure, it's over in Bucks but we won't hold it against them! Wes comes in 100g hanks of DK-weight, for £7.00 per hank. Proceeds go to the Greensand Trust so get knitting!



The **final report on the Important Arable Plant Areas of Bedfordshire** project is currently being written up. Some great - and some less-than-great - sites were discovered last summer. Stay tuned: the report will be out by the next edition of Beds BioNews!



Also almost completed is the **report from the Chalk Hills of Bedfordshire Hedgerow Survey**. Thanks to the Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre we've been able to compare our current results to 60 years of history, to find out how the hedgerow network from Sundon to Barton has changed during that time. The report will be out in early January and as usual will be available on the BedsLife website.



An **online toolkit about wetland creation on brownfield sites** has just been launched. The work of PhD student Kirsten Wright, it is designed to help guide planners and conservationists in planning, designing and managing wetlands on previously developed land. Check it out at www.yourwetlands.co.uk.



New publications

The Tree Council is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its Seed Gathering Season by publishing a new book, *Trees and How to Grow Them*, by Margaret Lipscombe and Jon Stokes. This beautiful full-colour book covers everything you need to know about growing trees, and includes a great directory of the tree species you





might want to consider planting yourself. Copies can be purchased for £20 from the Tree Council website:

www.treecouncil.org.uk.

Upcoming events

Feb 26: GrantScape is hosting a one-day **Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) Training Course for biodiversity projects**. Among other topics the event will cover the dos and don'ts of preparing LCF bids. The course will take place at the Association of Charitable Foundations office in London. The fee is £100 and pre-booking is essential. For more information or to book a spot contact Matt Young on 01908 545785 or matt.young@grantscape.org.uk.

Mar 20: The theme of the **Chilterns Woodland Conference 2009** is 'Tree Pests and Diseases'. This is the annual event for all those interested in the management of Chilterns woodlands and their wildlife. The booking fee is £25 and includes a buffet lunch. Booking is essential: for more information contact John Morris on 01844 355503 or woodlands@chilternsaonb.org.

Jun 26: The National Trust will be your host for the **2009 Chilterns Chalk Downland Day**. The event will take place at their Bradenham Village property. Details to follow but put the date in your diary!

Jul 5-9: The **Second International Youth Symposium for Biodiversity** is being planned for Ottawa, Canada. Students aged 12-19 are invited to submit biodiversity project proposals to attend. If you, your school or community is involved in something valuable for biodiversity and you want to share it with the world then you should apply to be part of this great event! Details are available on the symposium website: www.biodiversitymatters.org.



BioNews is *a/ways* open!
 Have your say:
 contact Heather at
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 to put your news
 in the next Beds BioNews!

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