

Updates from SEG Members January 2016

Wildlife Trusts & WTSWW update

- The Welsh Wildlife Trusts have recruited a Wales Beaver Officer- the post was very competitive. Alicia Leow-Dyke will start in post in February to take forward our work towards beaver re-introduction. She will be based in the offices of Radnorshire Wildlife Trust.
- The Lapwing Recovery Project at Parc Slip nature reserve has seen an increase in numbers of breeding pairs. Currently developing and trialling new approaches to support them on site including decoys and conditioned taste aversion using eggs.
- WTSWW's Red Squirrel Officer, Becky Hulme, based in the mid Wales red squirrel partnership, has been in post for eighteen months now and has around seventy volunteers engaged in the project, making great progress in conservation of this population of red squirrels

Seabird data- ongoing monitoring on Skomer and Skokholm. Adult survival data takes a number of years data collection to give meaningful figures for survival. Data gathered in 2014 and 2015 by the University of Gloucestershire supported by JNCC now shows a 20-30% drop in over winter adult survival of some of Skomer's seabirds following the devastating winter storms of 2013-14. Demonstrates the importance of continuing to fund long term and detailed monitoring programmes for these key sites and species

Plantlife update

Atlantic Oak Rainforest LIFE bid development with RSPB. Large scale removal of *Rhododendron ponticum*, use of biochar, reintroduction of grazing, outreach – now being submitted in September 2017 alongside matching HLF bid.

Gower invasives – project 'completed' in December 2015. Good results but will require further treatment to be effective – seedlings and missed plants.

Carmarthen Dunes – Removal of sea buckthorn (Pembrey and Whitford) and conifers at Whitford, scrape creation on all three sites, funding for bryophyte, fungi, invertebrate and *Liparis* monitoring and surveys. Three year project.

Arable - NRW JWP – complete 'REF' project in 5 vice counties, SSSI criteria for arable completed, IAPA Report, survey areas significant for arable plants and monitor Mwnt SSSI.

White Stonecrop – still awaiting report and DNA profiling to determine extent of problem and if being caused by non-native stock.

Appointed new P/T Lower Plants and Fungi Officer, Tracey Lovering, through WG Core funding. (also F/T Outreach Officer, Helen Bradley and P/T PLinC Officer, also Tracey Lovering!)

Brecon Cliffs IPA – seeking funding for survey and writing management plan for sites in Project Area.

With core funding for PONT, the previous limestone grassland and heathland project has been scaled back to Conwy and Creuddyn to allow PONT to take forward the North East Wales Grazing Project. Conwy and Creuddyn will support our work with NT and Conway CBC on the Great Orme plus Plantlife may be supporting grazing plan this year.

Coronation Meadows – using donor sites to seed receptors. 2016 is the final year of project delivery. Good coverage of both donor and receptor sites.

SOMM – NT carrying out work on their land in Ceredigion. Project runs till summer 2017 and plans are being formulated for SOMM 2.

NPMS – Good initial take up of monitoring squares. Training taking place and further squares will be released for survey as take up uses up the squares currently available.

Meadows Groups – WG Core funding allows us to help establish more meadows groups in Wales to add to Monmouthshire and Carmarthenshire. Be happy to hear if anyone thinks a particular county is a priority – target is probably about 3 in next two years.

Habitats of Wales – A series of five leaflets highlighting key habitats in Wales, what to look for and where to go. First will be meadows launched at Kingcoed Meadow on National Meadows Day

Lichen Apprenticeship – WG Core allows us to run another Lichen Apprenticeship Scheme provisionally called PLAS Cennad. Programme and mentors currently being put in place.

Lepidoptera Update (July - December 2015)- Butterfly Conservation Wales

Russel Hobson, Head of Conservation Wales rhubson@butterfly-conservation.org

- Completed surveys and provided advice for sites with High Brown Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Silver-studded Blue, Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Large Heath (see below), Drab Looper, Silky Wave and Welsh Clearwing as part of NRW Joint Working Partnership
- Marsh Fritillary – Completed surveillance programme adding new sites in Pembrokeshire, undertake habitat condition assessments and mapping Fairwood Common, Gower with NRW staff.
- Winter work at private and BC sites begun - Target species over winter include Brown Hairstreak, High Brown Fritillary, Marsh Fritillary and Drab Looper.
- 'Frits about and other news' e-newsletter circulated regularly throughout the Spring, Summer and Autumn.
- Provided ongoing support for butterfly and moth recorders, volunteers and supporters.
- Supported three student projects on 1) Scarce Hook-tip, 2) Use of Drones for habitat mapping and 3) Use of verges by pollinators.

Large Heath as Climate Change Indicator

The Large Heath is a potential early indicator of climate change at the southern end of its UK range and it is one of just two species on the IUCN European Butterfly Red List. Its two most southerly sites are lowland raised bogs, at Cors Caron and Cors Fochno NNRs in

Ceredigion, where the butterfly is monitored by transects. However, upland sites are difficult to survey as the weather is difficult to predict.



Large Heath from the Denbighshire Moors

Butterfly Conservation Wales staff and volunteers have spent the last four years determining the extent of these upland Welsh populations. One key area of Wales where records were lacking was on the Denbighshire Moors. The Mynydd Hiraethog SSSI covers over 6000 hectares and between 2011 and 2014 around thirty seven areas of suitable habitat were surveyed. Fifteen of these were found to support the butterfly.

Mammals

UK mammal review - this is going ahead. The contract was let by NE and both NRW & SNH are contributing. The Mammal Society are doing the work and are currently doing a literature review & collating data sets (until the end of March). After that there'll be a process of reviewing the information. They've been in touch with BCT London office about availability of data.

The Red List categories will be done as part of this process.