

# Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan

## ACTION FOR WILDLIFE IN LINCOLNSHIRE

### Annual Report 2004

***The Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Partnership consists of a range of organisations and individuals whose aim is to safeguard and restore Lincolnshire's biodiversity. The BAP currently contains 41 action plans that identify the best methods of conserving the most threatened species and habitats in the historic county of Lincolnshire.***

### Introduction

The Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan is fast approaching its fifth anniversary. For this reason next year will see a major review and revision, alongside a national BAP review. Many of the targets in the BAP have now been achieved and the next stage is to produce new ones to ensure the success continues over the next five years. Where targets have not been achieved future options need to be carefully considered. The review will also consider possible new Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs). Three new SAPs (Bittern, Great Crested Newt and Urban Birds) and a new HAP (Gardens and Allotments) are currently in production and marine HAPs and SAPs are planned for a new extended Coastal section.

Some of the recent declines in biodiversity in Lincolnshire appear to have been checked. Several high profile species are flourishing in the county and more and more people are taking an interest in the natural world around them. One



national priority species doing particularly well is the bittern, with another good year for breeding pairs in 2004. At a national level this species is already well on the way to exceeding targets set

for 2010 and the Lincolnshire population is part of the driving force for this increase – showing the importance of biodiversity action at the county level.

Over the past year the Lincolnshire BAP partnership has also become involved with the various community strategies throughout Lincolnshire. Many of these strategies now include a reference to biodiversity and sustainable development. Having an input to these strategies is a very important task and should ensure that the biodiversity action plan process is continued by the local communities of Lincolnshire. Another important development is the progress made towards a Local Record Centre (LRC) for Lincolnshire. The LRC will provide a centre for all biodiversity data in the county and this will make the task of monitoring progress towards BAP targets far easier in the future. Information from the LRC will also be used to improve the BAP process, for example highlighting any species or habitats of conservation concern that may have been missed so far.

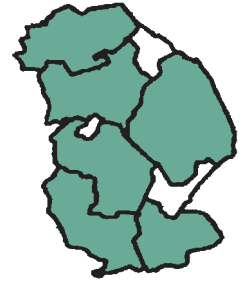
All the partners in the BAP partnership have contributed to biodiversity conservation in Lincolnshire over the past five years and the maps of the historic county included in this report show the extent of biodiversity action throughout Lincolnshire. The challenge now is to look at the next five years and beyond and to continue the progress made so far.

*Andy Simpkin*  
*Biodiversity Implementation Manager*



## Featured Project

**Greater Water-Parsnip** *Sium latifolium* – This fenland species (a semi-aquatic member of the carrot family) was formerly widespread within the county of Lincolnshire until the 1970's, but declined dramatically from this time until it was known at only seven wetland sites in 2003. It is a nationally scarce plant and the Lincolnshire BAP includes the target 'Regenerate plants from the seed-bank on suitable sites in Lincolnshire by 2005'.



The re-introduction to five sites within the former range of this nationally endangered species took place over the summer of 2004, with an additional three sites targeted for further reintroductions by spring 2005. This was done using seed taken under licence from existing sites within the county. This seed was then used to grow (over an 18 month period) plants sufficiently robust to compete in the wild with other aquatic plants.

These reintroductions will double both the number of sites where these plants are found within the county and raise the total number of plants in the wild from approximately 150 to 300. So far plants have been reintroduced to the river Welland near Tallington, Whisby Pits (Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve), Deeping Lakes (LWT nature reserve), Hagnaby Nature Area (Environment Agency) and Fiskerton Pit (EA). The next three sites will be the river Witham, Gibraltar Point NNR (LWT and Lincolnshire County Council) and Far Ings NNR (LWT).

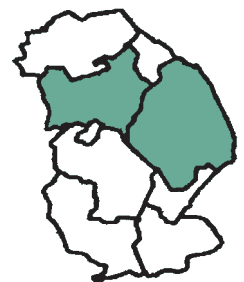
The project has involved volunteers from The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, support from the Environment Agency and English Nature, and Wild Planet Ltd providing project management and propagation. Anglian Water Environmental Partnerships provided sponsorship in 2002/3.

The plan now is to closely monitor the reintroduction sites to see if the plants become successfully established and then hopefully reintroduce the plant to further sites within Lincolnshire's coastal grazing marshes. The aim is to remove the species from the endangered species list for the county by 2010 by establishing a number of self-sustaining populations.

## Progress towards BAP targets

### Woodland

**Legbourne Wood** – This important ancient woodland site near Louth in East Lindsey is a surviving fragment of once more extensive woodlands in the county. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust purchased this 90 acre wood in 2004 and will now look to maximise the biodiversity potential of the woodland. The Trust is planning to manage some of the existing rides to improve the woodland flora and create 'edge' habitats for birds and butterflies. Any management will involve minimum intervention in the woodland. This is especially important as the wood supports one of the most important heronries in the county. Areas of ancient woodland in Lincolnshire are not common and this presents an opportunity to meet BAP targets for maintaining and enhancing ancient semi-natural woodland in the county.



**Bardney Limewoods** – The Lincolnshire Limewoods are nationally important but not particularly well known. The Lincolnshire Limewoods Project, led by Lincolnshire County Council, aims to make the Limewoods area more sustainably accessible to local communities and visitors and to contribute to BAP targets (nationally, regionally and locally) by better management of the area's biodiversity resource. By improving access, encouraging new visitors, increasing community awareness and understanding, improving the landscape and enhancing the area's ecological value the project will maximise the biodiversity and heritage value of this important part of the county.

**Dormouse** *Muscardinus avellanarius* – the dormouse is a national BAP conservation priority which became extinct in Lincolnshire over 20 years ago. A reintroduction programme based at Chambers Farm Wood (part of the Bardney Limewoods owned by the Forestry Commission) is aiming to re-establish the species in the county. Two years ago 32 captive bred adult dormice were released into the woodland where the dormouse would have occurred originally. In 2004 over 30 dormice were found in nestboxes, along with a litter of eight babies. This would suggest the population is starting to establish itself in the woodland and hopefully will continue to thrive.

## Progress towards BAP targets

### Farmland and Grassland

Throughout the county work by FWAG, Defra and others has again resulted in habitat creation and restoration work on farmland (see table), with funds provided by the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The total numbers of applicants for the scheme was down in 2004, but this was an expected decrease due to the changes in agri-environment schemes with the new entry level and higher level schemes starting in 2005. This work contributes greatly to a number of BAP targets within Lincolnshire (for example hedgerow creation) and hopefully the new schemes will encourage even more farmers to help biodiversity.



	NK	SK	EL	WL	SH	B	NL	Total
Lowland Pasture (ha)	85	191	252	6.5	1.3	-	16.63	552 ha
Hay Meadow (ha)	7.4	11.4	15.4	-	-	-	3.11	37 ha
Wet Grassland (ha)	13.2	266.3	434.6	-	109.3	-	8.8	832 ha
Grassland (ha)	90.4	332.6	622.5	-	112.5	-	23.2	1181 ha
Hedge Planting (m)	31,898	25,941	39,975	-	2,570	135	17,811	118,330 m
Ponds and Scrapes	9	71	177	-	42	-	3	302
Field Margins (m)	72,691	132,048	193,184	-	21,046	370	83,305	502,644 m

NK - North Kesteven, SK - South Kesteven, EL - East Lindsey, WL - West Lindsey, SH - South Holland, B - Boston, NL - North Lincolnshire. Data from FWAG.

The Lincolnshire FWAG team also carried out 378 advisory visits to farms across the county. These visits provide farmers with advice on different aspects of biodiversity conservation on their land, for example suitable management techniques for ponds, lakes, rivers, drains, springs and wet flushes. Lincolnshire County Council and other local authorities also continued with grant schemes and advice to encourage planting of hedgerows and trees of native species.

**Lincolnshire Bat Group** – The past year was as usual a busy time for the Lincolnshire Bat Group. One of the most important aspects of the groups work is public relations – showing members of the public that bats are harmless creatures and easy to live with. Bat group volunteers attended the Lincolnshire Show and a number of other shows, events and talks. Over 200 people visited the stand at the county show. Volunteers also dealt with over 300 enquiries about bats, 60 grounded bats and visited many homes and other buildings with suspected bat roosts over the past year. The group also runs a ‘bats on the map’ scheme, encouraging people to report bat sightings and help to map the distribution of bats in Lincolnshire (the county show produced over 160 records). This work is vital in achieving the BAP target to survey and monitor the status of bat populations in Lincolnshire.

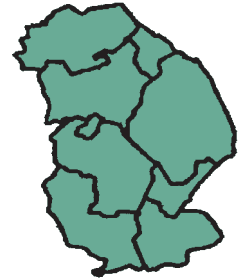


*“Lincolnshire Bat Group dealt with over 300 enquiries about bats and attended a number of shows and other events”*

**Protected Roadside Verges** – The Protected Roadside Verge scheme involves Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Lincolnshire County Council. The scheme covers 63 verges (a total of 49 miles) identified as having a special floristic interest. Each verge has a Wayside Warden who help to look after and record the biological interest, and the verges are marked with special boundary posts. During the past year most of the verges remained in good condition, and a number of successful training events were held for Wayside Wardens. An excellent new leaflet has been produced by LWT with the support of LCC and the Road Haulage Association which gives details about the scheme and the importance of roadside verges for biodiversity. BAP targets include expanding the road verge scheme to protect more verges and this process should start soon.

### Rivers and Wetlands

**Otter and Water Vole** – Work, led by the Environment Agency, has continued throughout 2004 on these two charismatic aquatic mammals. In September two workshops were held in Market Rasen for Internal Drainage Board, Local Authority and other engineers who may come across water vole in their work. These were both very popular and a series of factsheets has been produced to aid site managers and engineers in surveying sites for water voles and what to do if the species is present. A report on the status of water vole, otter and mink in Lincolnshire will be available soon and there will also be a list of key water vole sites in the county.



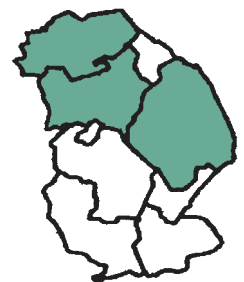
**Spined Loach** – English Nature and the Environment Agency are undertaking a three year study and survey on the extent and habitat preference of spined loach in the wider Counter Drain catchment, and a joint report should be published in 2005. This will further considerably our knowledge of the ecological requirements of this fish. Alongside this work, English Nature and the Welland and Deepings IDB are undertaking monitoring work on the Gravel Drain to establish the impact of different drain management techniques on populations of spined loach, which could help to inform future decisions on how rivers and drains supporting this rare fish are managed.

**Chalk Streams** – Lincolnshire has some nationally important chalk streams and BAP targets include actions to restore and enhance their wildlife interest. A chalk streams partnership was recently formed in the county and its objectives include working towards these BAP targets and to ensure that chalk streams are recognised for their conservation value. The partnership includes Environment Agency, English Nature, Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Countryside Service, LWT, Anglian Water and the Wild Trout Trust. A leaflet emphasising the value of chalk streams for wildlife is currently in production, various factsheets will be produced for landowners and there is a demonstration restoration project completed by EA on the Waithe Beck to show best practice management of watercourses. This also ties in with a national report on chalk streams in England produced this year.

**Deeping Lakes** – In late 2003 LWT purchased the Deeping Lake, adjacent to the Welland Bank Pits reserve. The site will now be known as Deeping Lakes. This SSSI is an important large water body in the south of the county and will now be managed by LWT for the benefit of wildlife, meeting BAP targets to enhance the conservation value of ponds, lakes and reservoirs. The reserve officially opened in September and new paths and a bird hide will allow the public to view the important flocks of wintering wildfowl on the reserve along with other wildlife.

### Heathland and Peatland

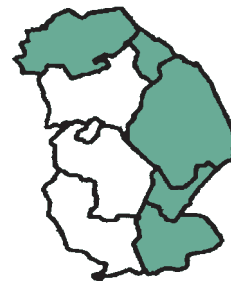
**Coversands Heathland Project** – The Coversands project continued to make great progress in 2004 and celebrated its first Anniversary. Part of *Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage* this project runs until 2008 and aims to regenerate 700 hectares and recreate 250 hectares of lowland heath in the northern half of historic Lincolnshire. One of the project's main objectives is to help local communities experience and appreciate their Coversands heathland and an access and interpretation officer is already starting to achieve this, involving a number of community groups and volunteer management parties. Access and interpretation has been improved at several sites to allow local people to enjoy the heathland. An ongoing programme of tree clearance, scrub clearance and grazing by sheep and cattle will continue to create and restore heathland areas. In the past year 52ha of scrub and 70ha of conifers were cleared, 25,000m of fencing installed and 240 Hebridean sheep and 20 Dexter cattle were used to graze areas of new and old heathland.



**Peatland** – Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust continues to manage its peatland reserves in the north of the historic county in a suitable way to preserve this valuable habitat, meeting BAP targets to maintain the existing area and quality of peatland in the county. The removal of encroaching trees and scrub along with management of water levels enables peatland plants and other wildlife to survive in this small fragment of a once more extensive habitat.

### Coastal

**The Wash** – The second revised edition of the Wash Estuary Management Plan was produced during 2004 by the Wash Estuary Strategy Group. This document sets out guidelines for sustainable use of The Wash, ensuring the estuary system can continue to function effectively – physically, biologically and chemically. This plan includes biodiversity issues and a policy to ‘..ensure that the biodiversity of The Wash is maintained and enhanced ...’. In 2005 the group will start work on a Wash Local BAP that will tie in with the Lincolnshire and Norfolk BAPs. A good practice guide for The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site was also launched in 2004 by the EMS partnership.



**Humber Estuary** – In February 2004 the new Humber Estuary SSSI was notified by English Nature. This new designation includes the seven existing SSSIs in and around the estuary and also enlarges the area notified to include the entire estuary and associated features of interest. The increased protection for the estuary will contribute to a number of BAP targets for inter-tidal habitats, eg saltmarsh and grazing marsh.

**Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marsh Project** – Grazing marsh has declined enormously as a habitat, often due to a lack of suitable grazing, and this project is looking at measures needed to halt the loss and recreate new areas of coastal grazing marsh by providing incentives for farmers to maintain livestock. Work being carried out by ADAS/FWAG on behalf of partner organisations (English Nature, English Heritage, DEFRA, LWT, LCC, East Lindsey District Council and North East Lincolnshire Council) is identifying suitable areas for targeting habitat recreation and enhancement. Discussions are being held with farmers and landowners to find out what they consider is needed to maintain grazing marsh. English Nature is also funding an ecological survey of drains in the marshes. This project ensures that progress towards BAP targets for grazing marsh will be maintained.

### Urban

**Gardens and Allotments Survey** – The results of this survey (available soon) give a positive picture of garden biodiversity in Lincolnshire and gardeners' attitudes towards wildlife in general. A new Gardens and Allotments HAP will be added to the Lincolnshire BAP soon: promoting wildlife friendly gardening throughout the county is something that many BAP partners can get involved with.



**Local Authorities** – Throughout Lincolnshire local authorities continue to include biodiversity issues in their work. Planners now consider protected species and habitats when considering planning applications and management of public open space takes biodiversity issues into consideration. The City of Lincoln produced the draft of a Lincoln City BAP in 2004. This followed a public consultation exercise to raise awareness of biodiversity in the city. The final version will be produced in 2005 and implementation will help achieve many of the county BAP targets.



*“attitudes towards wildlife in gardens and allotments appears to be very positive”*

**Wildlincs** – This project aims to create a series of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) across Lincolnshire. The involvement of local communities is very important and some of the proposed sites already have community groups associated with them. Mareham Pastures (Sleaford), the Pingle (Coningsby) and Cross O'Cliff Orchard (Lincoln) are progressing well with habitat management, litter clearance, wildflower planting etc. More sites will become LNRs over the next year with a county wide distribution. Similar projects in North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire are also showing good results with several LNRs created.

## *Progress towards BAP targets*

### **Other Projects, Surveys and Biodiversity Work**

**ECAP** – Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's Education and Community Action Project continued in 2004. Nearly 10,000 schoolchildren from throughout the county and beyond have now visited LWT reserves to take part in educational activities. The project also advises schools on conservation projects within school grounds and helps community groups to become involved with conservation by encouraging community conservation areas. The role of this project in emphasising the value of biodiversity throughout the county is huge.

**Publicity and Conservation Advice** – Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan was promoted at a large number of events during the past year, ranging from the County Show to the East Lindsey Local Strategic Partnership Assembly and the British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water. Promotion of the BAP also included a number of talks and guided walks. Another important aspect of BAP work was the provision of biodiversity and conservation advice to nearly 100 individuals and groups throughout the county, ranging from small wildlife ponds to larger habitat recreation schemes.

**Website Development** – The Lincolnshire BAP website will be completely updated over the next few months, with the new site online early in 2005. This new site will provide easy access to a large amount of important information concerning biodiversity in Lincolnshire.

**Local Record Centre (LRC) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS) resurvey** – Two new developments in the county will both help biodiversity conservation. A project development officer for the proposed LRC should be in post by early 2005 with the objective of establishing a record centre within three years. Wildlife Sites or Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) have been identified by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust over the last 30 years and their conservation is critical to the achievement of biodiversity targets. This year, with funding from Lincolnshire County Council, the Trust has resurveyed sites in four pilot areas and field tested new, rigorous criteria for establishing their wildlife value. Utilising the existing BAP partnership, a panel will be set up to decide on future site designations.

## *Chairman's Report*

Andy Simpkin's title is slightly misleading. He does not go around the county putting the BAP into practice. It is more a co-ordinating role, pulling together all the achievements around the county and encouraging partners to announce their own action programmes. To this end the BAP has had a successful year. More local authorities are making reference to biodiversity in their community strategies and local strategic partnerships (LSPs). There is still scope for greater public involvement via LSPs and Andy will be pleased to assist and advise.

The Steering Group is pleased to announce that a Local Record Centre is about to be established with its own small management group drawn from the BAP partnership. A Development Officer is about to be appointed, initially for three years, with funding from English Nature, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Lincolnshire County Council, and Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union. Records will be fed in from various sources around the historic county. The relationship with the BAP post will need to be established well before the end of the three year period, as will sources of funding after the three years.



The inclusion of maps of the historic county within this annual report show that targets and actions have been addressed in all local authority areas. Of particular significance in this respect is the inclusion of Wildlife Sites (or SNCIs) under the aegis of the partnership, with a panel of members appointed to make assessments. This provides a double benefit: Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust will no longer be the sole decision maker and the BAP partnership will be involved with conservation on sites in private ownership, again covering all local authority areas. The BAP partnership will have a better picture of biodiversity in the county. This is in addition to sites under the influence of the Defra Countryside Stewardship Scheme. This scheme already makes a major contribution to restoring biodiversity in a farmed landscape.

Finally, the report of the Garden and Allotments Survey clearly shows the contribution of the ordinary family garden to biodiversity in the county. There is plenty of good advice available to gardeners to give further help to wildlife. I urge everyone to do their "little bit" to help increase biodiversity in the county.

*D F Wright*  
*Chairman Steering Group*

## *Financial Report*

### BAP funding to March 2004

Item	£
<b>Receipts</b>	
Carried Forward	12,063
Funding	25,868
LWT Admin Contribution	2,600
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>40,531</b>
<b>Payments</b>	
Implementation Manager Post and on costs	19,174
Reports and website	142
Training	709
Admin charge	2,600
Travel Costs	400
Sundry costs	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,025</b>
<b>Surplus carried forward</b>	<b>17,506</b>
These accounts have been audited by Streets as part of their audit of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust for the year to 31 March 2004	

### BAP funding to March 2005

Funder	£
Balance of funds brought forward	17,506
Boston Borough Council	2,360
East Lindsey District Council	2,150
English Nature	4,000
Lincolnshire County Council	3,000
Lincolnshire IDBs	2,000
South Holland District Council	1,300
South Kesteven District Council	2,680
West Lindsey District Council	2,150
LWT Admin contribution (estimate)	2,704
Other	165
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>40,015</b>
<b>Projected Expenditure</b>	
BIM Salary and on costs	20,000
Travel Costs	1,500
Reports and Website	2,932
Training	750
Admin Costs (estimate)	2,704
Sundry costs	200
<b>Total Projected Expenditure</b>	<b>28,086</b>
<b>Estimated funds carried forward 31 March 2005</b>	<b>11,929</b>

## Partners

Anglian Water	Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
Black Sluice IDB	Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board
Boston Borough Council	National Farmers' Union
British Waterways	North East Lincolnshire Council
BTCV	North East Lindsey IDB
Country Land and Business Association	North Kesteven District Council
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	North Lincolnshire Council
East Lindsey District Council	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
English Nature	South Holland District Council
Environment Agency	South Holland IDB
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	South Kesteven District Council
Grantham Angling Association Fly Fishing Section	Upper Witham IDB
Inland Waterways Association	Wash Estuary Strategy Group
Lincoln City Council	West Lindsey District Council
Lincolnshire Bat Group	Witham 1st District IDB
Lincolnshire County Council	Witham 3rd District IDB
Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union	Witham 4th District IDB
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	

## Acknowledgements

All those organisations and individuals who have in any way helped with the delivery of the Lincolnshire BAP over the last year deserve thanks.



## Contact Details

If you would like to find out more about the BAP please visit the website at: [www.lincsbap.org.uk](http://www.lincsbap.org.uk)

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