

Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan

ACTION FOR WILDLIFE IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Annual Report 2006

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 contains action plans that identify the best methods of conserving the most threatened species and habitats in the historic county of Lincolnshire (Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire).

Introduction

All Lincolnshire BAP partners have been extremely busy reviewing and updating the BAP document. This process is now at an end with the launch date for the revised BAP set for 10th November. Thanks must go to all partners who contributed in some way to the revision process.

The 2nd Edition sets out the conservation objectives for Lincolnshire over the next 10 years and will be an important tool for many organisations. The UK BAP is also under review and revised national targets and actions should be available soon. Launching at the same time as the revised BAP will be the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC).

The role local authorities have to play in the conservation of biodiversity has been highlighted by the recent Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This Act extends the statutory duty relating to biodiversity to all government bodies and public authorities.

One of the ways in which local authorities can make a difference for biodiversity is through planning and planning policy documents. PPS9 advises that Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) should indicate the location of designated sites of importance for biodiversity, identify any areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats and support this restoration or creation through appropriate policies.

Local Wildlife Sites are a key part of this network of sites designated for biodiversity value. The publication of *Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management* by Defra recognises the importance of these non-statutory sites in delivering BAP targets both nationally and locally. *Local Wildlife Sites – Guidelines for their Identification and Selection in the Historic County of Lincolnshire* was published this year by the Lincolnshire BAP Partnership. This will enable consistent selection of Local Wildlife Sites throughout the county.

The East Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy (RBS) was also published during 2006. This has been produced by the East Midlands Regional Biodiversity Forum and has been adopted by the East Midlands Regional Assembly. The strategy provides a link between UK Biodiversity Plans and the local BAPs in the region, presenting a strategic approach to conservation across the East Midlands.

Finally the NERC Act also creates Natural England – bringing together English Nature, the Landscape, Access and Recreation division of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service to conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment. Natural England will unite in a single organisation the responsibility for enhancing biodiversity and landscape – in rural, urban and coastal areas - with promoting access and recreation.

***Andy Simpkin
Biodiversity Implementation Manager***

Coastal & marine

Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marsh – The Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marsh Project (involving The Countryside Agency, Defra-RDS, East Lindsey District Council, English Heritage, English Nature, Environment Agency, FWAG, Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board) has produced a report with recommendations for measures to halt the loss of grazing marsh along with suggested target areas for grazing marsh conservation and restoration. A leaflet detailing the projects vision for the coastal grazing marshes is now available. The task of talking to landowners and finding possible funding sources is ongoing



The Wash – During the last year the Wash Estuary Strategy Group has delivered in partnership the third Wash Week which is a series of events celebrating wildlife and heritage. Its last annual conference, Wash Wide, was themed around biodiversity and heritage. The Group also launched a new project funded by the Lincolnshire Fenland Leader+ programme based around introducing horticultural growers to renewable energy technology, which will help them decrease their environmental impacts and contribute to the safeguarding of biodiversity through tackling climate change. The project will also produce an educational CD-Rom on The Wash, the fenland hinterland and related issues for distribution to all educational institutes within The Wash area. Finally the Project Officer was also involved with the national review of the UK marine habitat and species action plans. Further details can be found at www.washestuary.org.uk.

The Wash National Nature Reserve – the largest NNR in the UK (8573 hectares) has grown even larger with an extension at Kirton Marsh, which was launched in August. This new extension has secured a further 308 hectares of one of the oldest areas of saltmarsh on The Wash along with 11 hectares of grassland on the landside of the sea bank which will now be managed by Natural England, mainly for breeding waders. This will also provide another managed access point to the largest estuarine system in the UK, supporting the largest number of breeding common seal and migratory and wintering waterbirds, with visitor facilities planned for the future.

Freiston Shore and Frampton Marsh – ongoing work at Marsh Farm Frampton has created 94 hectares of coastal grazing marsh which is being managed to benefit wildlife, particularly breeding birds. A further 70 hectares is being created at Freiston. Also at Freiston two of the main islands in the saline lagoon have been reprofiled and topped off with a mix of gravel and cockle shells to try to attract nesting seabirds, particularly little terns, and to benefit roosting waders. Forthcoming work involves the construction of two water storage reservoirs (at Marsh Farm, Frampton and at Freiston) to store winter water which can be released onto the grazing marsh during the spring to keep moist field conditions for the benefit of breeding lapwings and redshanks.

Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve (NNR) – the refurbished visitor and education centre is now open at Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's Gibraltar Point nature reserve. A new interpretive exhibition covers the biodiversity of Lincolnshire's coastal and marine environments.

Alkborough – the sea defences at Alkborough were breached in September. This managed re-alignment scheme will create a range of intertidal and wetland habitats. Further schemes are planned for the Humber over the next few years.

Cleethorpes Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – North East Lincolnshire council continues with its management of the sand dunes that form part of Cleethorpes LNR, and in the past five years the biodiversity on the site has improved, with orchids numbers increasing 10 fold. The council is now talking to Natural England about a further five year management of the area.

Farmland and Grassland

Lincolnshire Bat Group – Members of the group attended eight county shows and other events with displays during the year, some for the first time, such as the Deepings and Friskney Shows, all of which produce valuable records about bats in the county. There were also a number of bat walks and talks. Next year the group hopes to investigate attending shows in some of the less well recorded parts of the county. The past year was a quieter year than usual for calls from the public but bats taken into care continued to provide records, and there has been further confirmation of whiskered/Brandt's bats breeding in the Scunthorpe area.



Perhaps the most significant event was the confirmation of a large site in the south-west of the county as a potential breeding area for barbastelle bats, with much activity recorded. Further work will be done on this in 2007.

Lincolnshire and Rutland Limestone Natural Area – following the publication of a conservation strategy and vision document by the partnership behind this project there has been more progress this year. A report on the prospects for developing seed supplies of local provenance is complete and more funds are available to progress the project further. The long term aim is to restore the extensive tracts of flower-rich limestone grassland that this area once supported and to encouragement management of benefit to biodiversity.

Agri-environment schemes – The new Environmental Stewardship Scheme (which includes the Entry Level Scheme and Higher Level Scheme) continued this year. FWAG and other partners throughout the county have re-created and restored a range of wildlife habitats and encouraged more favourable management.

Lincolnshire Wolds Partnership – The Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service (LWCS) continues to promote and encourage Biodiversity Action Plan activity across the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) prioritising work within the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan. The Wolds Landscape Grant Scheme (LGS) continued to be extremely popular with farmers, landowners and local community groups. During 2005/06, 16 schemes were given grant assistance leading to 1700 metres of hedge planting, 200 metres of hedgerow restoration, three pond/wetland schemes, one grassland site improvement, planting of 1955 trees and development of two community conservation projects.

A further priority for LWCS has been the promotion of the Beech Clump Project in recognition of the landscape and wildlife value of these special features which occur throughout the higher 'Chalk Wolds' landscape character area. During 2005/06 LWCS worked with a number of landowners to enable the planting of 1250 trees and shrubs to create 15 new clumps and under-planting three existing clumps in need of restocking.

Farmland Birds Project – LWCS and English Nature (now Natural England) joined forces in 2005/06 to run a consultancy project to investigate data sources for the Lincolnshire Wolds farmland birds. The study highlighted over a dozen sources of information much collected through the hard work of local volunteers connected with the Lincolnshire Bird Club, RSPB and BTO. It is hoped that this information will aid future management.

A further phase of the project has been the development of a series of best practice guidance sheets linking a variety of Entry Level options to nine target farmland bird species in the Wolds. Fact sheets developed in consultation with FWAG and the NFU are now available and include specific guidance for modifying cultivation techniques for winter cereals, spring cereals, grassland, set-a-side, oil seed rape, peas & beans and sugar beet cultivation to provide benefits for a wide range of farmland bird species in the Wolds. Further details on this and other LWCS projects can be found at www.lincswolds.org.uk

Heathland and Peatland

Coversands Project - The Project is now in its fourth year, and with just one year remaining, it is well on its way to achieving its targets. Targets have been exceeded in the amount of stock fencing erected, areas grazed by Hebridean sheep and Dexter's cattle, the amount of scrub removed, bracken treatment and other weed control. The overall targets for achieving 950 hectares of heathland restoration and recreation are expected to be achieved.



In July of 2006 the Project held a Heathland Forum at Woodhall Spa Golf Course. With more than 70 people attending, the day provided an opportunity to share knowledge on heathland management and visit the local heathland resource in the area. Also held in July, the Coversands Heath Week provided the opportunity for people all over Lincolnshire to visit and find out more about the County's heathlands. With 14 events, there was something for everyone and many children and adults joined in with the various activities, walks and talks. Another Heathland Forum and Heath week are planned for 2007.

The final year will focus on bringing all elements of the project together to ensure that the work of the Coversands can continue beyond the end of the Project.

Rivers and Wetlands

Chalk Streams – the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project is a partnership of organisations (Anglian Water, Environment Agency, Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the Wild Trout Trust) of organisations working together to conserve and enhance the nationally important chalk streams of Lincolnshire. Chalk streams are very rare habitats which support some of our most threatened plants and animals. There are eighteen large, and numerous small, chalk streams in and around the Lincolnshire Wolds.



A "best practice demonstration project" has taken place near Market Rasen and a leaflet and series of fact sheets are available. The project has also produced a number of reports outlining the floral and faunal resource of the Lincolnshire chalk streams. Currently in production are similar reports for the unique blow wells of Lincolnshire.

A project officer is now in post. Since April 2006 more than 30 advisory visits and surveys have been undertaken and 200m of habitat enhancement work has taken place. Further details and copies of the factsheets can be viewed on www.lincswolds.org.uk/chalkstreams.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) – Over the past year LWT has extended its ownership of areas of open water at Far Ings NNR, Deeping Lakes and Whisby Nature Park. All of these areas will now be managed with biodiversity in mind and will contribute to the viability of the existing reserves.

Woodland

Lincolnshire Limewoods Project – The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funded Limewoods project continued to make progress during the past year. This partnership project (involving Lincolnshire County Council, Forestry Commission, English Nature and a range of county and local organisations) aims to protect, enhance and promote the natural and historic landscapes of the Bardney Limewoods area over a period of five years.



Progress towards BAP targets

This year has seen an additional eight hectares of new native woodland planted (with a further 50 hectares being planted this winter). There has also been about five hectares of restoration on plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), mainly conifer removal, and two kilometres of ride widening in ancient woodlands along with two hectares of coppicing. Under the Limewoods Linear Conservation Features Scheme 7026 m of new hedge has been planted. A wide range of projects are planned for the coming years, including improved access and interpretation, improved management of the key areas and more woodland creation.

The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is receiving funding from Natural England and Defra's Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund for work within the Lincolnshire Limewoods project area. The project will run for two years and is called Wildlife Corridors in the Lincolnshire Limewoods. The grant of £57,600 will help achieve UK, regional and local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and will supplement the work funded by the HLF and project partners.

Urban

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) – There are now 15 LNRs in Lincolnshire, 10 in North Lincolnshire and three in North East Lincolnshire with several new sites declared this year, including Silica Park and Pheonix Park in Scunthorpe and Far Ings, Barton Upon Humber. These sites form a vital network of greenspace for local communities and many events were held on LNRs over the past year.



Gods Acre – following a national conference, interest in the wildlife of churchyards has been revived in Lincolnshire. The next stage will be to put together a pilot project (probably in the Wolds AONB) with the aim of supporting a volunteer network to carry out conservation work and management in churchyards. Training in survey and management methods will also be provided.

Eagle Eyes (Sas Szemek) – The Wash Estuary Strategy Group in partnership with Simon Rummery, an environmental education specialist, has successfully secured funds from Lincolnshire Fenland LEADER+ and Lincolnshire County Council to undertake a trans-national project with Hungary based on biodiversity improvements, such as adding bird boxes, and learning programmes within some southern Lincolnshire primary schools. The studies will be based on phenology - the timing of natural events, eg the blooming of the first snowdrop – and comparison will be made between the two countries once all the planting and boxes are in place in the school grounds. The second strand of the project concentrates on older young people and improving their environmental awareness of the Fens, the Wash and wider issues such as climate change and biodiversity services through summer exchange schools. The first one took place this summer.

Other Projects, Surveys and Biodiversity Work

Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) – the records centre now has two staff in post with the Development Officer joined by an Information Officer during 2006. The huge task of incorporating existing datasets into the LERC database is already underway, but this will be a long process. For example data from Lincolnshire Bat Groups years of surveys and publicity work is now being computerised.

Local Wildlife Sites – Defra published *Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management* in 2006, this document states the importance of these non-statutory sites and that they should be defined by clear criteria and included in relevant planning documents. *Local Wildlife Sites – Guidelines for their Identification and Selection in the Historic County of Lincolnshire (Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire)* were also finalised in 2006 by the Wildlife Sites Review Group (a sub-group of the Lincolnshire BAP Partnership) and are available on the Lincolnshire BAP website. A Local Wildlife Sites Panel has now started to meet on a regular basis to assess resurveyed SNCIs and new sites against these strict criteria. The decisions of this panel can then be fed into the planning

Progress towards BAP targets

process and over the next few years all Local Wildlife Sites throughout the county will be identified. Of particular importance is the opportunity this presents for targeting resources to the conservation of these valuable sites through Environmental Stewardship and other grant schemes. City of Lincoln Council has commissioned a full survey of existing and potential sites of value for wildlife throughout the city in advance of preparation of its Local Development Framework.

The South Humber Bank Wildlife and People Project – this five year project, funded by a HLF grant, involves the Environment Agency, North Lincolnshire Council, Natural England and the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. The aim is to bring together the educational, recreational, conservation and heritage assets of the area therefore providing better opportunities for the surrounding communities to access the areas natural and built heritage and to become more involved. All of the major wildlife sites in the area are covered by the project, including Alkborough Flats and Far Ings NNR.

Future Challenges

Climate Change – over the coming years climate change will have severe implications for biodiversity both negative and positive. These impacts will need to be considered when deciding upon conservation measures for habitats and species in the future. The predicted climate changes for the East Midlands are amongst the highest in England with increased temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns and an increase in ‘freak’ weather events.

The distribution of species will change, and more adaptable species will be favoured. There may also be a lack of water in summer, vital for many wetland habitats, with increased floods in the winter. A longer growing season will favour certain plant species and coastal habitats will be lost to rising sea levels.

The potential rapid rate of change is a significant threat and may mean that many species cannot adapt in time and therefore the most important strategy for mitigating the effects of climate change will be to ensure that existing habitats are in the best possible condition and therefore more resilient to change, maximising the area and diversity of semi-natural habitats so that some areas are affected less and maintaining and enhancing a linked network of habitats to provide opportunities for dispersal of species.

Chairman's Comments

Each year, the Annual Report selects key achievements during the previous twelve months, reflecting efforts made by organisations within the partnership. This year there has been an additional contribution from the partnership – the BAP has been revised! As Andy Simpkin has indicated in the introduction, the revision has been driven by the need to keep up to date with national developments. It is 14 years since the Rio Earth Summit set the ball rolling and 11 years since the first national Biodiversity Action Plan. In the last few years there have been a number of changes in wildlife legislation and in Government initiatives relating to planning policies, all of which have a bearing on biodiversity action. Add the new agri-environment schemes and the ever-increasing concerns over climate change and the need for local BAP revision is obvious. So, in addition to the normal activities, colleagues across the partnership have been amending habitat and species action plans, with Andy playing a key role in co-ordinating the work. In fact this co-ordination will remain a key role as he collects data through the ‘BARS’ (Biodiversity Action Reporting System) system. I think that it is time to change his title to ‘Biodiversity Co-ordinator’ in line with the terminology used by other local BAPS.

You will notice in the revised BAP that marine habitat action plans are not included. Revision is taking place at national level and one or two colleagues are involved in developing local action plans. In the meantime, reference is made to marine and coastal targets in the Regional Biodiversity Strategy which was published recently. Since Lincolnshire is the only local BAP in the East Midlands with a coastline I was involved in writing an early draft for the chapter on ‘Coast and Sea.’ Additional coast and marine action plans will appear in due course. An action plan for veteran trees is included in some local BAPS and the Steering Group may decide that Lincolnshire needs a plan to cover some splendid specimens which are present in various locations across the county.

The Coversands Project has been running for nearly four years now and there has been real progress towards regenerating or re-creating several hundred hectares of lowland heath. Other projects making progress include the Lincolnshire Limewoods Project, the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Limestone Project, the Baston and Thurlby Fen 'wet fen' Project, the South Humber Wildlife and People Project, and the Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marsh Project. If the various Higher Level Schemes of the Environmental Stewardship are added to these projects it is clear that there is a fair amount of biodiversity-related activity across the historic county. Putting it all into perspective, however, we are conscious of the fact that Lincolnshire is regarded one of the lowest biodiversity areas in England! But take heart and continue the good work. I find all sorts of interesting species in a variety of small habitats around the county.

D F Wright
Chairman of BAP Steering Group

Financial Report

BAP funding to March 2006

Item	£
Receipts	
Carried forward	17082
Funding	30475
LWT admin contribution	2810
Total Receipts	50367
Payments	
Implementation Manager post and on costs	20248
Reports and website	1860
Training	0
Admin charge	2810
Conference and events	429
Travel costs	246
Sundry costs	747
Total	26340
Surplus carried forward	24027
These accounts have been audited by Streets as part of their audit of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust for the year to 31 March 2006	

BAP funding to March 2007

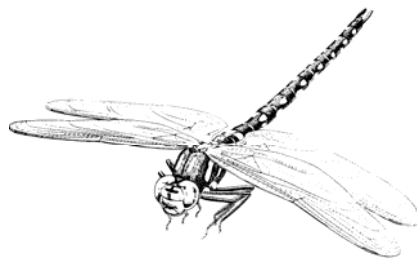
Funder	£
Balance of funds brought forward	24027
Boston Borough Council	2360
East Lindsey District Council	2370
English Nature	15000
Lincolnshire County Council	3000
Lincolnshire IDBs	2250
North East Lincolnshire Council	1500
South Holland District Council	1300
South Kesteven District Council	2840
West Lindsey District Council	2280
LWT admin contribution (estimate)	2920
Other	60
Total Income	56907
Projected Expenditure	
BIM salary and on costs	20586
Travel costs	500
Reports and website	500
Conference, events and review costs	9000
Training	750
Admin costs (estimate)	2920
Sundry costs	200
Total Projected Expenditure	34456
Estimated funds carried forward 31 March 2008	22451

Partners

Ancholme IDB	Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
Anglian Water	Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board
Black Sluice IDB	Ministry of Defence (Defence Estates)
Boston Borough Council	National Farmers Union
British Waterways	National Trust
BTCV	North East Lincolnshire Council
Country Land and Business Association	North East Lindsey IDB
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	North Kesteven District Council
East Lindsey District Council	North Lincolnshire Council
English Nature	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Environment Agency	South Holland District Council
Forestry Commission	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	Welland and Deepings IDB
Lincolnshire Bat Group	West Lindsey District Council
Lincolnshire County Council	Witham 1 st District IDB
Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union	Witham 3 rd District IDB
Lincolnshire Police	Witham 4 th 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

or contact:

Andy Simpkin
 Biodiversity Implementation Manager
 c/o Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
 Banovallum House
 Manor House Street
 Horncastle
 Lincolnshire
 LN9 5HF
 Tel. (01507) 526667
 Fax. (01507) 525732
 e-mail: biodiversity@lincstrust.co.uk

