

# **THE PARKS WILDLIFE STRATEGY**

**A framework for biodiversity  
action in Bristol's parks and  
green spaces**



**Consultation Draft  
July 2007**

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## List of Acronyms

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| AWT   | Avon Wildlife Trust                             |
| BAP   | Biodiversity Action Plan                        |
| BARS  | Biodiversity Action Reporting System            |
| BCC   | Bristol City Council                            |
| BLP   | Bristol Local Plan                              |
| BRERC | Bristol Region Environmental Records Centre     |
| BTCV  | British Trust for Conservation Volunteers       |
| CPM   | Community Park Manager                          |
| CSV   | Community Service Volunteers                    |
| DETL  | Department of Environment Transport and Leisure |
| EA    | Environment Agency                              |
| EMAS  | Eco-Management and Audit Scheme                 |
| FoA   | Forest of Avon                                  |
| GIS   | Geographic Information Systems                  |
| HAP   | Habitat Action Plan                             |
| HLF   | Heritage Lottery Fund                           |
| IRIS  | Involving Residents in Solutions                |
| LA21  | Local Agenda 21                                 |
| LNR   | Local Nature Reserve                            |
| NE    | Natural England                                 |
| NET   | Natural Environment Team                        |
| NOF   | New Opportunities Fund                          |
| NT    | National Trust                                  |
| PPG   | Policy Planning Guidance                        |
| PWS   | Parks Wildlife Strategy                         |
| SAC   | Special Area of Conservation                    |
| SAP   | Species Action Plan                             |
| SNCI  | Site of Nature Conservation Interest            |
| SPA   | Special Protection Area                         |
| SSSI  | Site of Special Scientific Interest             |

# INTRODUCTION TO THE PARKS WILDLIFE STRATEGY



Burnet moth

*'Bristol...a green capital in Europe, tackling the causes of climate change and creating a clean and attractive built and natural environment'*

**Bristol Community Strategy  
2006**



Eastwood Farm LNR

*Accessible natural green space: where nature can be experienced and enjoyed by people, providing important refuges for wildlife*

## Section 1.1

### THE PARKS WILDLIFE STRATEGY

The Parks Wildlife Strategy (PWS) is principally about nature conservation in Bristol City Council's parks and green spaces. However, it also recognises the city council's role in wider strategic nature conservation issues, such as the production of a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Bristol.

The PWS has a five-year lifespan (to 2012), but includes actions that will continue beyond that date (e.g. the implementation of the Bristol BAP).

The strategy will be reviewed and updated for 2012.

## Section 1.2

### PURPOSE OF THE PARKS WILDLIFE STRATEGY

The PWS is a key component of Bristol City Council's and, in particular, Bristol Parks' commitment to biodiversity action.

The PWS sets out an ambitious 5-year programme of nature conservation related works. This is in accordance with national and local priorities for nature conservation management. And includes, the provision of accessible and high quality natural green space for the enjoyment and use of Bristol's residents and visitors to the city.

## Section 1.3

### HEADLINE ACTIONS

- Develop a skilled dedicated workforce specialising in the management of nature conservation sites ensuring optimal conditions for wildlife alongside attractive, welcoming and easily accessible places for people to enjoy.
- Produce a Biodiversity Action Plan for Bristol to safeguard and enhance rich and diverse habitats and important urban species within parks and green spaces.
- Achieve favourable conservation status on all publicly accessible Sites of Nature Conservation Interest controlled by Bristol City Council by 2020.
- Create new habitats for wildlife to remedy shortfalls in natural green space.

- Establish a network of 16 Local Nature Reserves providing access to high quality sites for wildlife and a focus for supporting community involvement.

# WILDLIFE: THE STRATEGIC & POLICY CONTEXT

The city council is guided by its nature conservation work by a framework of international, national and local legislation, policy and guidance.

## Protected species

Those present in Bristol include:

*Badger*  
*Great-crested newt*  
*Slowworm*  
*Bristol onion*  
*Western spiked speedwell*  
*White-Clawed crayfish*  
*Otter*  
*Water vole*  
*Bats*  
*Nesting birds*

## Site Designations in Bristol

### Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Designated under the Habitats Directive, SACs are of European importance for wildlife and form part of the Natura 2000 series.

*Avon Gorge SAC*  
*Severn Estuary (candidate SAC)*

### Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Designated under the Birds Directive for importance as breeding or feeding area for birds

*Severn Estuary SPA & Ramsar site*

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Designated because of their UK importance for nature conservation

*Ashton Court SSSI*  
*Avon Gorge SSSI*  
*Horseshoe Bend SSSI*  
*Quarry Steps SSSI*  
*Severn Estuary SSSI*

### Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs)

Designated because of their local importance for nature conservation, geology or geomorphology, e.g.

*Nightingale Valley SNCI*  
*The Downs SNCI*  
*Old Sneed Park SNCI*  
*Badocks Wood SNCI*

### Wildlife Network Sites (WNS)

Designated because of their strategic importance for wildlife, because of their position within a wildlife corridor, their buffer function to an SNCI or because they contain important natural features

### Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

Designated because of their local importance for nature conservation and local people.

*Troopers Hill LNR*  
*Lawrence Weston Moor LNR*  
*Royate Hill LNR*  
*Stockwood Open Space LNR*  
*Eastwood Farm proposed LNR*  
*Badocks Wood proposed LNR*  
*Manor Woods Valley proposed LNR*

## Sustainable Development

This strategy aims to ensure that the city becomes more environmentally sustainable. Nature conservation work should be seen as a core part of sustainable development, the principles of which were set out in the various agreements developed at the Rio Summit in 1992 (and subsequently Johannesburg in 2002). The key declarations for biodiversity were the Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21, which led to the development of Local Agenda 21 strategies across the UK, including Bristol. These responsibilities are now being augmented through the Community Strategy for Bristol.

## International Policy and Guidance

There are two key European Union directives on nature conservation – the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive, both of which have been incorporated into UK law.

## National Legislation, Policy and Guidance

There are a number of important pieces of wildlife legislation, the key ones being the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006. These cover a variety of issues that impinge on the work of Bristol Parks, including the designation of sites of national importance for wildlife, the protection of certain species and habitats and the duty of local authorities to properly consider wildlife interests on its land.

The main source of guidance, particularly with reference to planning, is Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9), 2005. This provides the policy framework for the designation of non-statutory sites that are of substantive value for nature conservation. PPS9 also emphasises the importance of wildlife in cities for

local communities. In Bristol, these non-statutory sites are recognised as Sites of Nature Conservation interest (SNCIs).

PPS9 also states that Local Authorities should aim to maintain wildlife networks by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats through effective policies.

England Biodiversity Strategy, 2002 remains the most relevant national strategy guidance for biodiversity:

## EXTRACTS from:

**'Working with the Grain of Nature - A Biodiversity Strategy for England'**

## Priority Policy Issues:

### 1. Parks and urban green spaces:

Ensuring biodiversity as an integral part of parks, playing fields and other urban green spaces. Multifunctional role of green spaces linked to urban renaissance.

### Outcomes desired:

Parks to be managed with biodiversity conservation as a core principle, but not necessarily a primary aim;

Principal urban parks linked to Local BAP objectives;

Relevant parks and urban green spaces protected and managed as local wildlife sites;

Best Value Performance Indicators for parks linked to biodiversity targets, and

Residents (to be) within 300 m of (their) nearest area of natural green space, wherever possible.

### 2. Social Inclusion and live-ability

Biodiversity as part of the quality of life.

### 3. Health

Recognising and reinforcing the links between biodiversity and health.

### **Local Policy and Guidance**

The production of a PWS was originally proposed during the development of the Parks Strategy in the late 1990s. It builds on that strategy and others, including the Greater Bristol Nature Conservation Strategy (1991) and the current Avon Biodiversity Action Plan (2004).

The main policy documents in Bristol that incorporate biodiversity action are:

The Bristol Local Plan, which includes policies for the protection and enhancement of species, habitats and sites including Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and Wildlife Network Sites (sites of strategic importance for wildlife because of their position within a wildlife corridor, their buffer function to an SNCI or because they contain important natural features). The Bristol Local Plan is due to be replaced by the Local Development Framework from 2009.

Bristol Community Strategy (2006) is an overarching plan for Bristol, its people and its built and natural environment.

Relevant actions in the first and current Community Strategy are:

*All Sites of Nature Conservation Interest will have achieved "favourable conservation status" by 2010*

*Monitor and report on a draft Biodiversity Action Plan for the city*

Parks and Green Space Strategy (2007) sets provision standards for the quality, quantity and access to types of green space including natural green space. The PWS is a companion document to the Parks and Green Space Strategy.

## WILDLIFE IN BRISTOL

Bristol has a rich wildlife heritage with a great diversity of sites, species and habitats of interest. Many of these sites are managed by Bristol Parks. The most significant site in Bristol is the Avon Gorge, which is of international importance for its rare plants, some of which are found nowhere else in the world. While the Gorge is a unique feature, wildlife and wild places are found throughout Bristol, forming an integral part of the fabric of the city bringing pleasure and inspiration to many people and adding to the attractiveness and live-ability of the city.

### UK Habitat and species losses

*Since 1947 40% of the UK's ancient woodlands have been damaged or destroyed*

*Between 1930 and 1984 97% of species rich lowland grassland was lost to intensive agriculture or development.*

*Water voles populations have declined by almost 90% in the last 60 years.*



Bristol Onion



Troopers Hill

### Section 3.1

## HABITATS IN BRISTOL'S PARKS & GREEN SPACES

**Woodlands** - There are over 300 hectares of woodland in Bristol's parks and green spaces. Examples include Blaise Castle Estate where areas have been continuously wooded for over 400 years. Other examples include Ashton Court Estate, where veteran trees and ancient wood pasture support rare insects and fungi. In recognition of this, the estate is designated as a SSSI and is one of the most important examples of this habitat type found in the UK. Other woodland sites include Eastwood Farm, Oldbury Court, The Downs, St Anne's Wood and Badock's Wood. In addition, scrub woodland occurs at a number of sites including Malago Vale and Stockwood Open Space. Scrub provides a valuable habitat for nesting birds, invertebrates and other species.

**Grasslands** - Bristol contains a variety of different types of grasslands. Limestone grassland is found on The Downs, where rare plants such as dropwort burnet and bee orchids can be seen. Malago Vale, Highridge Common and Narrowways Junction contain areas of neutral grassland with knapweed, devil's bit scabious and ox eye daisy. Troopers Hill is one of the few areas of acid grassland / heath in the city.

**Wetlands** - The rivers Avon, Frome and Trym provide key wildlife corridors through the city. These rivers and other waterways, such as the Malago, run through parks and green spaces and attract a variety of wildlife including kingfishers, cormorants and dragonflies. The rhynes (or drainage ditches) of Avonmouth support a

regionally important population of the endangered water vole. Static water bodies such as ponds and lakes are important for frogs, toads and newts and as foraging areas for bats.

**Natural Features** - Natural features such as hedges and trees in parks can provide a refuge for wildlife, especially songbirds.

### Section 3.2

## PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

People derive considerable benefits from contact with nature. Research has shown that natural green spaces in the city provide the chance to escape from the stress of urban life, providing informal spaces in which people can relax, get close to nature and refresh the spirit. They can contribute to landscape character and make areas more attractive. Such spaces can greatly improve quality of life and so help to create a more liveable city. They can also encourage inward investment and hence employment. They have also been shown to have health benefits and can provide informal and exciting play spaces for children.

In 1999 a survey of inner city organisations in Bristol (carried out by IRIS) found that local people wanted more natural spaces and that they valued the opportunity to connect with nature, for example through hearing birdsong and seeing the changing seasons. In research conducted as part of the Parks and Green Space Strategy (2006), Bristol residents identified natural green space as the type of space they prefer over all other types. But, factors affecting whether people choose to visit natural green space are complex. Distance from people's homes and quality are

important factors, but also cultural and social attitudes are highly relevant.

Where site management is poor, associated with a lack of investment, the spread of scrub and 'weedy' fields can give the impression of neglect. This in-turn encourages the dumping of rubbish and vandalism and leads to concerns over personal safety. All these factors discourage people from using natural green space.



## SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE

To safeguard Bristol's wildlife for future generations, a long-term vision for biodiversity is needed. This should be guided by the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan for Bristol setting out actions for key species and habitats. The Plan's success will depend on the development of a biodiversity action plan process that ensures delivery of actions and allocation of new resources.

**BIODIVERSITY** is  
"the richness of the natural world – the variety of plants and animals, together with the soil, rocks and water on which they depend."



wildlife surveys



Bee orchid

### Section 4.1

## ACTION FOR WILDLIFE

### Policy objective

**Bristol Parks, working in partnership with other organisations, will seek to fulfil its contribution to the UK and regional biodiversity targets through the production and implementation of a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Bristol reflecting key species and habitats found within the city.**

### Background

The UK BAP sets out the species and habitats most at risk nationally and the actions that must be taken to save them. The South West BAP does this on a regional basis.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans and partnerships provide the mechanism for delivering the UK BAP goals at a local level.

### Current Situation

◇ In 1998, Bristol Parks set up the Bristol Biodiversity Project. This involved the design of a project logo, the launch of a leaflet and the production of two Habitat and Species Action Plans for water voles and ancient trees. These have, in part, been implemented with local conservation organisations and other interested parties. However, limited resources have prevented their proper implementation and the production of further Habitat and Species Action Plans as was originally intended.

◇ The Local Agenda 21 Strategy led to the formation of a biodiversity topic group, which produced a thematic LA21 action plan for biodiversity.

◇ The Avon Biodiversity Partnership was established in 2000 to provide a strategic approach to biodiversity planning in the sub-region. The

partnership launched a BAP for Avon in 2004.

◇ The Bristol Partnership Environment Delivery Group is charged with progressing the Bristol Community Strategy and includes the action to produce a BAP for Bristol. In 2005, the Bristol BAP partnership was set up and Bristol Parks, working in partnership with a number of organisations, began the production of the Bristol BAP.

### Key Issues

◇ Bristol needs a BAP to provide an overall framework to guide biodiversity action for key species and habitats across the city, including in parks and green spaces. New resources will be required to produce and implement this BAP.

◇ The Avon BAP provides an opportunity for the 'Bristol-specific' actions to be represented at this level. It also provides a framework on which to base the Bristol BAP. The Avon Biodiversity Partnership also provides a valuable forum for sharing best practice.

◇ The Bristol BAP will subsume relevant actions from the Avon BAP, but will include new actions for species and habitats relevant to Bristol, for example species actions plans for sparrows, and habitat actions plans for allotments. Bristol Parks is likely to have a significant responsibility in ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the Bristol BAP.

◇ The implementation of the Bristol BAP should provide an invaluable opportunity for local people and organisations to become involved in wildlife action.

## SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE

## ◆ ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

| Action Point   | Time-table | Target  | Staff Resources          |                                   | Financial Resources (if known) | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels   |
|--|------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
|  |            |   | Natural Environment Team | Others                            |                                |   |
| <p><b>Produce a Biodiversity Action Plan for Bristol</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Developed in consultation with interested individuals and relevant organisations</li> <li>➤ Prepared with support from Avon Wildlife Trust and other partners</li> <li>➤ Action plans produced for priority species and habitats, including species and habitats of significance in an urban context</li> <li>➤ Implementation fully costed and programme has political support</li> </ul> | 2007       | Completed BAP with targets set and agreed by end 2007 | 30 days                  | AWT, NE, EA, BTCV, FoA and others | £8,000                         | <p>Habitat Action Plan completed for Veteran Trees</p> <p>Species Action Plan completed for water voles</p> <p>Avon BAP completed July 2004</p> |
| <p><b>Appoint Biodiversity Officer to oversee implementation of Bristol BAP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Collate baseline data</li> <li>➤ Driver for implementation</li> <li>➤ Education</li> <li>➤ Monitoring</li> </ul>  | 2008       | Officer in post by 2008                               | Admin.                   | AWT                               | £30,000 per year               | <p>No progress</p> <p>Capital or grant</p>  |

## PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE

### Policy objective

Bristol Parks will protect species and habitats of nature conservation importance. And will investigate the 'best means' of securing the protection of all SNCIs in private ownership, including support and guidance for landowners, but also by considering the option to acquire land of nature conservation value for the benefit of local communities.

### Background

Species protection legislation, planning policy and site acquisition can all be used as tools to ensure that the biodiversity of Bristol is protected and managed.

### Current Situation

◇ Most site management works, e.g. forestry specifications, are currently designed to take account of species protection legislation.

◇ The Bristol Local Plan, which is currently under review, contains a number of nature conservation related policies. Implementation and development of planning policy currently occupies over 50% of the time of the two full-time Nature Conservation Officers based in Bristol Parks.

◇ The city council has taken an active role in protecting key SNCIs, through acquiring these sites, e.g. Royate Hill and Narrowways Junction.

### Key Issues

#### Planning Policy and Implementation

◆ Where the city council undertakes development in parks and green spaces, it will endeavour to adopt best nature conservation planning and practice.

◆ Opportunities will be taken through planning gain, via Supplementary Planning Document 4 (SPD4), to enhance parks and green spaces for wildlife or in mitigating nature conservation loss.

#### Species protection legislation

◆ Ensuring that all Council specifications and contracts are fully compliant with species protection legislation and that contractors understand the implications of this legislation (see section 2).

◆ Ensuring that all Community Park Managers (CPMs) and other relevant Parks Service staff, e.g. events organisers, have a full understanding of species protection legislation.

◆ Ensuring that site managers are aware of the location of protected species, e.g. badger setts, within their sites.

#### Site Acquisition and Disposal

◆ There are a number of privately owned SNCIs, which are valued by local people as informal open spaces, but where management (or lack of) is harming the quality of the site for people and wildlife. The city council will consider the best means of securing the long-term future of these sites, e.g. through guidance and support or, if there is no practical alternative, purchase, lease, land swaps or acquisition by a third party. Such sites may be considered for declaration as LNRs.

◆ Where Council land is being considered for disposal, through the Parks and Green Space Strategy, Allotments Strategy or the Asset Management Plan, a full assessment of its nature conservation value will be required, to ensure that valuable sites are not lost.



noctule bat



#### Nesting Birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to destroy or damage a bird's nest during the nesting season. Tree or scrub works should therefore not be carried out during the nesting season, unless a proper assessment has been made.



Great-crested newt

# SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE

## ◆ PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE

| Action Point   | Time-table | Target                         | Staff Resources               |                               | Financial Resources (if known) | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels   |
|--|------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
|  |            |                                | Natural Environment Team      | Others                        |                                |   |
| <p><b>Investigate 'best means' of securing the protection of all SNCIs in private ownership</b></p> <p><b>Undertake review of SNCI network, and determine for each site:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Current condition for wildlife (see Section 5.1)</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Current and predictable threats to wildlife by actions or in-actions of owner</b></li> </ul> | 2007       | Analysis and recommend actions | 10 days                       | AWT<br>BRERC                  | Not known                      | <p>BCC owned SNCIs subject to ongoing favourable conservation status audit. This to be rolled out to non BCC sites as resources available.</p> <p>Ongoing programme of SNCI surveys (see Section 7)</p> |
| <p><b>Increase capacity of Bristol City Council to achieve its statutory responsibility in protecting wildlife through the planning system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Employ additional 1 full time equivalent nature conservation officer</b></li> </ul>   | 2007       | Officer in post                | Minimal to establish the post | Minimal to establish the post | £35,000/pa                     | Planning Department have given in principle agreement to fund post for 2-years.   |

**NOTE: The majority of the 86 SNCI are not considered at threat by the actions or in-actions of their owners. However, a small percentage are subject to threat and hence targeted action is required to determine the 'best means' of securing their long term protection.**

# LOOKING AFTER PARKS AND GREEN SPACES FOR WILDLIFE

Good management of existing wildlife sites is crucial in maintaining biodiversity and making them attractive places for people to visit. Creating new areas for wildlife is also vital, to ensure that people can enjoy wildlife close to home.



Avon Gorge SSSI



Badocks Wood LNR



Eastwood Farm LNR

## Section 5.1

### MANAGING FOR QUALITY

#### Policy objective

Bristol Parks will ensure that natural green space for which it is responsible will be managed to maintain and enhance its wildlife interest, as well as its value to local communities. Specifically, all publicly accessible Sites of Nature Conservation Interest will be in 'favourable nature conservation' condition' by 2020.

#### Background

Of the 86 SNCIs citywide (including Ashton Court), Bristol City Council is responsible for managing 58 sites (of which Bristol Parks manages 55 sites – part or all).

It is important that all areas of natural green space are properly managed, but especially the SNCIs, which are our most important sites for wildlife. Without appropriate management, their wildlife interest and attractiveness can quickly be lost, reducing their value to wildlife and people alike.

#### Current Situation

◇ Nature conservation management plans have been produced for 12 key SNCIs. Proper implementation of these plans has occurred on some sites, but has only been carried out on an ad hoc basis on others. Many of these plans are in need of review and need to be integrated with site management plans as these are developed.

◇ The wildlife interests of some other sites has been successfully managed through nature conservation specifications e.g. at Highridge Common, even though a management plan may not exist.

◇ Management has also been achieved using volunteers,

contractors, Avon Wildlife Trust (AWT) and others.

◇ Results of the Getting the Measure of Parks quality assessments (provision, condition and maintenance) of natural green space managed by Bristol Parks are:

|             | Provision | Condition | Maint. |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| SSSI        | 3.0       | 2.9       | 2.8    |
| SNCI        | 2.3       | 2.2       | 2.2    |
| Network     | 2.1       | 1.8       | 2.0    |
| Other       | 1.9       | 1.6       | 2.3    |
| All Average | 2.1       | 1.9       | 2.2    |

1 is poor, 2 moderate, 3 good and 4 excellent.

Generally, quality decreases the lower the hierarchy of designation, reflecting a lower level of investment towards non-designated areas of natural green space. All sites, apart from SSSIs, are well below an acceptable 'Good' standard.

◇ Work is ongoing to determine whether the SNCIs in Bristol are in 'favourable conservation status' (as defined in Articles 1e and 1i of the Habitats Directive and adapted in Bristol for assessing SNCIs). Favourable conservation status is an assessment of whether management is appropriate for the habitats present and that the extent and quality of interest has not declined since last measured. This audit of all SNCIs will identify, on a site-by-site basis, what management interventions are needed to meet, and progressively exceed the standard. This will feed into the development of site management plans as specific actions.

◇ The Getting the Measure of Parks and favourable conservation status assessments are both concerned with the quality of our wildlife sites. Getting the Measure of Parks scores a site for user experience of wildlife, habitat quality and maintenance. Favourable conservation status is a more detailed

assessment of habitat quality. This is based on mapping the habitats present, recording plant species present and considering whether current management is maintaining habitat quality.

◇ SNCIs are not the only places to find wildlife in the city. Small, non-designated areas of natural green space can be very important to people as their only contact with nature. It is important to provide multipurpose, well-designed green spaces incorporating natural green space where appropriate to the character of the site.

### **Key Issues**

◆ The quality of all natural green space needs to be raised from current Moderate (2.1) to Good (3 or above).

◆ All SNCI, SSSI and SAC designated sites needs to be in favourable conservation status by 2020, and for such sites to be managed according to an agreed site management plan.

◆ In developing management plans for all non-SNCIs or in making decisions about existing (or proposed) wildlife features within these sites, it is important that these features are well managed in terms of quality for wildlife, but also to ensure they appropriately reflect the character and use of the site.

# SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE

## ◆ Managing for Quality

| Action Point  | Time-table   | Target  | Staff Resources          |   | Financial Resources (if known)   | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|---|--|---|
|   |  |   | Natural Environment Team | Others  |  |   |
| <p><b>Complete audit of all SNCI managed by Bristol City Council to determine whether in favourable nature conservation status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete audit</li> <li>➤ Agree improvement plan for all sites</li> <li>➤ Implement improvement plans to achieve favourable conservation status by 2020 (or as soon as possible – achievement timescale dependent on complexity of works required)</li> <li>➤ Establish ongoing monitoring programme</li> </ul> | <p>2007/8</p> <p>2008</p> <p>2008 on</p> <p>2008 on</p> <p>2007-</p> | <p>All SNCIs managed by BCC to be in favourable nature conservation status by 2020.</p>       | <p>30 days per year</p>  | <p>External consultant<br/>AWT<br/>BRERC<br/>CPMs</p> | <p>£15k (to complete the audit)</p> <p>Costs part of programme to re-survey all SNCIs in Bristol</p> <p>(See Action Table 7)</p> | <p>Add data on sites surveyed to date and findings</p>          |
| <p><b>Complete audit of all SNCI in private ownership (with owner consent) to determine whether in favourable nature conservation status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Actions as above</li> </ul>   |  | <p>All SNCIs in private ownership to be in favourable nature conservation status by 2020.</p> | <p>To be agreed</p>      | <p>To be agreed</p>                                   | <p>To be agreed</p>  | <p>No action</p>  |

## CREATING NEW PLACES FOR WILDLIFE

### Policy objective

**Bristol Parks will use habitat creation schemes to achieve the Bristol minimum standard for accessible natural green space (all residents to live within 700 metres of an area of natural green space), and to broaden the appeal of parks and green spaces improving their biodiversity, including targeting non-SNCI sites.**



Pond habitat creation project at Lawrence Weston Moor LNR

### Background

Creating new wildlife habitats can bring nature closer to people in their everyday lives, as well as increasing the biodiversity resource of the city.

It is important to recognise that habitat creation is rarely an adequate replacement for loss of existing habitats, whose management and protection should be the first priority.

### Current Situation

◆ Habitat creation schemes have already taken place in some parks and green spaces, both on a large scale, such as the creation of new native woodland at Okebourne Road Open Space, and on a smaller scale such as meadow creation at Badocks Wood.

◆ The introduction of nature conservation specifications in the grounds maintenance contract has enabled significant areas of grassland to be managed as wildflower meadow.

◆ The Avon BAP and proposed Bristol BAP will set targets for creating new habitats, and encouraging conditions for certain species.

### Key Issues

◆ A review of parks and green spaces via the Getting a Measure of Parks quality assessment has identified, in broad terms, where some habitat creation schemes may be suitable.

◆ Generally, there are tremendous opportunities to encourage more wildlife into our parks and green spaces, whether via the establishment of new wildflower meadows, ponds, woodland or small-scale interventions such as bird and bat boxes.

◆ There is the opportunity to capture the imagination of the people of Bristol by establishing areas of wildflower meadows in areas such as road verges, outside high rise blocks of flats, on roundabouts and areas of highly visible but otherwise un-used and rather dull mown grass.

◆ There are good examples of best practice from around the UK in creating and enhancing habitats e.g. the lake restoration schemes in London and wildflower planting schemes in Merseyside and Sheffield.

◆ In the Bristol Local Plan, Wildlife Network Sites are identified; they act as buffers to existing SNCIs and connect SNCIs together and to the open countryside. They should thus form a strategic focus for habitat improvement and creation works.

◆ Important considerations before embarking on habitat creation schemes include its appropriateness to the character and use of the site and the need to involve local people in decision-making. In addition, habitat creation must be based on a sound understanding of the current ecological value of the site and of BAP target habitats and important species.

◆ Planning gain, new landscaping schemes, lottery-funded projects, regeneration bids and other new initiatives all provide opportunities for new wildlife enhancement schemes. Such opportunities need to be promoted to a wide audience.



Seeding a new meadow at Badocks Wood LNR



Tree planting



## CREATING NEW PLACES FOR WILDLIFE

| Action Point   | Time-table                         | Target   | Staff Resources          |            | Financial Resources (if known)  | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels  |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------|---|--|
|  |                                    |  | Natural Environment Team | Others     |   |  |
| <b>Wildflower Meadows for Bristol Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Site selection, community involvement, detailed specifications</li> <li>➤ Establish new wildflower meadows across Bristol</li> <li>➤ Monitoring and review</li> </ul>   | 2008<br><br>2009-10<br><br>2010-11 | 8 new wildflower meadow areas by 2012<br><br>(linked to BAP targets) | 20 days per year         | CPM<br>AWT | £10,000<br><br>Will depend on site and scale.<br><br>Estimated cost per hectare new meadow and maintenance £???.          | No progress  |
| <b>Woodlands for Bristol Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish new native woodlands across Bristol</li> </ul>   | 2008-10                            | 4 new native woodlands by 2012<br><br>(linked to BAP targets)        | 10 days per year         | CPM<br>FoA | £10,000<br><br>Will depend on site and scale.<br><br>Estimated cost per hectare planted and 3-year maintenance £5,000 /ha | Review of potential planting sites completed 2002 identifying 10 possible woodland planting sites.<br><br>2 new woodlands planted since 2002.    |
| <b>Wild about Parks Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Target 25 non-SNCI sites and introduce / enhance wildlife interest / quality via a variety of means appropriate to the site (bird/bat / bee / hedgehog boxes, new ponds, deadwood piles, meadow cut grass, tree planting etc.)</li> <li>➤ Project to target areas of city with below average provision of natural green space (quality / quantity / accessibility)</li> </ul> | 2008 -                             | 25 enhancement schemes by 2012                                       | 10 days per year         | CPM<br>AWT | £20,000<br><br>Will depend on site<br><br>Nominal allowance of £500 per site  | Getting the Measure of Parks Quality assessment protocol identifies non-SNCIs with good wildlife enhancement measure, plus sites with potential. |

## MAKING IT HAPPEN - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



Volunteers at work



Community group at Troopers Hill LNR

### Policy objective

Bristol Parks will work in partnership with the voluntary sector and community groups to manage more SNCIs and wildlife features in other parks and green spaces.

### Background

Voluntary organisations and community groups are involved in a variety of ways in the management of city council owned SNCIs. Some have taken on most of the day-to-day responsibility for management of sites, whereas others may provide volunteers for specific tasks. This partnership working can provide many added benefits, for example bringing new resources such as the HLF-funded community and capital works led by AWT on its reserves, and a raised profile for the site.

### Current Situation

◇ The AWT works in partnership with the city council in supporting the management of seven SNCIs: Lawrence Weston Moor LNR, Stockwood Open Space LNR, Royate Hill LNR, Brandon Hill Nature Park, Kingsweston Meadows, Coombe Brook Valley, and part of Ashton Court Estate.

◇ Narrows Millennium Green Trust manages Narrows Junction SNCI, in St Werburghs.

◇ BTCV and Green Gyms provide volunteers for specific tasks on various sites.

◇ Some site-specific community groups carry out management work on SNCIs, e.g. The Friends of Old Sneed Park, Friends of Nightingale Valley, Friends of Troopers Hill and Malago Valley Conservation Group.

◇ Other organisations may support nature conservation work generally on

SNCIs, e.g. Forest of Avon Tree Life Centre.

◇ Many of the relevant community groups are represented on the Parks Forum.

### Key Issues

◇ Partnership management with the voluntary sector and community groups needs to be carefully thought through to ensure the optimum benefits for wildlife and the community. All partners need to be clear about their role on the site.

◇ There is a significant opportunity to further develop partnership working with AWT, based on developing a new partnership agreement and revised scope of joint working.

◇ BTCV are very valuable in being able to implement specialist conservation tasks. This resource should be used effectively and the work properly co-ordinated and monitored to ensure maximum benefit.

◇ The Forest of Avon has a significant role in providing support to deliver some of the actions within the PWS.

◇ The preparation of site management plans is a key means to define and agree with voluntary / community groups nature conservation priorities for a site and the best means for these to be delivered.

◇ The focus on encouraging wildlife related community involvement parks and green spaces is dealt with in section 6.1

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## ◆ Working with Key Partners

| Action Point  | Time-table              | Target  | Staff Resources          |        | Financial Resources (if known)                         | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels  |
|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------|--|--|
|   |                         |   | Natural Environment Team | Others |  |  |
| <p><b>Seek to increase the number of SNCIs with significant management input by the voluntary sector and / or community organisations</b></p> <p>➤ <b>Develop new partnership agreement with AWT (linked to sites and agreed programmes)</b></p> <p>➤ <b>Evaluate potential partnership agreements with e.g. BTCV and CSV</b></p> | <p>2008</p> <p>2008</p> | <p>New sites managed in partnership with voluntary sector / community groups</p> <p>Focus to be new LNRs (network of 16 proposed – see Section 6.1)</p> | 10 days                  | CPM    | Resource needs to be determined for each site selected | <p>Seven sites managed in partnership with AWT</p> <p>Current £16,000 payment to AWT for site management</p> |

## MAKING IT HAPPEN - CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

### Policy objective

**Bristol Parks will develop a skilled dedicated workforce specialising in management of nature conservation sites to improve maintenance and management regimes ensuring optimal conditions for wildlife alongside attractive, welcoming and easily accessible places for people to enjoy.**



Contractors at work on Lawrence Weston Moor LNR

*Oldbury Court Estate  
After the introduction  
of new grassland  
management  
specifications, rare  
wildflowers such as  
parsley piert,  
subterranean clover  
and storksbill bloomed  
for the first time in  
decades*

### Current Situation

- ◇ In 1992 detailed specifications were drawn up for the nature conservation management of grassland areas. These included annual hay cuts on existing wildflower meadows and a mixture of hay cuts and mowing regimes to create new meadow areas in more formal parks. These specifications have been subsequently revised and are now used successfully on over 30 sites.
- ◇ A review of the effectiveness of the nature conservation specifications within the Grounds Maintenance contract was completed in 2006. The review included a number of recommendations designed to improve the nature conservation management of such sites.
- ◇ A research trial looking at the long-term impacts of current wildflower meadow maintenance regimes was started in 2004, again leading to management recommendations.
- ◇ Customer research suggests that natural green space is one of the most valued spaces. But too many natural green spaces are suffering from dereliction, damaging their value for nature conservation and making them threatening and unattractive.

### Key Issues

- ◆ Bristol City Council has made a commitment to the development and compliance with EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme)

standards for all its operations that impact on the environment. As part of this ongoing commitment, Bristol Parks will be developing its own EMAS standards including those relevant to nature conservation specifications and work.

- ◆ We intend to make substantial improvements to natural green space through more active interventions, including the improvement of footpaths free from overhanging vegetation and the clearance of scrub to make sites feel more open and welcoming.
- ◆ We intend to develop a skilled and dedicated workforce that will specialise in the management of nature conservation sites. This team will have the dual role of optimising conditions for wildlife and in making such wildlife sites attractive, welcoming and accessible places for people to enjoy.

# SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE

## ◆ Contract Management

| Action Point<br>Priority  | Time-<br>table | Target   | Staff Resources                |        | Financial<br>Resources<br>(if known) | Current progress<br>towards targets within<br>current resource<br>levels   |
|---|----------------|--|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--|
|   |                |  | Natural<br>Environment<br>Team | Others |                                      |  |
| <b>Establish and develop a skilled dedicated workforce specialising in the management of nature conservation sites, with suitable specialist equipment</b>  | 2008           | Team in place and responsible for the maintenance / management of nature conservation sites      | 30                             | CPM    | Within revenue budgets               | £70k current spend on 'Agricultural Works'<br><br>Capital investment to establish team and equipment.                    |
| <b>Nature Conservation Contracts (Agricultural Works) within the Grounds Maintenance Contract relating to the management of wildflower meadow, hedgerows, riparian zones</b><br><br>➤ <b>Implement recommendations of Agricultural Contract Review 2006</b> | 2007           | All contracts compliant with specifications (client and contractor roles reviewed and clarified) | 10 days                        | CPM    | Within revenue budgets               | Audit of grassland specification completed 2006<br><br>Subsume work with creation of dedicated wildlife management team. |
| <b>Review EMAS standards and guidelines relevant to nature conservation contracts and specifications</b>  | 2008           | All contracts and specifications reviewed and compliant with EMAS standards                      | 5 days                         | CPM    | Not known                            | Culture and Leisure Services EMAS accredited   |

## WILDLIFE FOR EVERYONE

People need nature in their everyday lives. It can bring huge benefits in relieving stress, refreshing the spirit, and improving the health and quality of people's lives. Bristol Parks has an important role to play in responding to this need, by providing access to high quality sites for nature, by helping people engage with the natural world, and by increasing people's enjoyment and understanding.



Support for Royate Hill



Lawrence Weston Moor Local Nature Reserve

*The Bristol standard for accessible natural green space is that all residents should be within 700 metres of a wildlife site.*

## WILDLIFE & COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT

### Policy Objective

Bristol Parks will develop a network of 16 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) across the city providing access to high quality sites for wildlife and as a focus for supporting community involvement.

Bristol Parks will ensure that all Bristol's residents live within 700 metres of an area of natural green space, and will work towards achieving Natural England's recommendation of 300 metres.

### Background

Community involvement is about people doing something positive about their environment, which often brings enormous benefit to the people involved and the quality of the park or green space.

Natural England recommend that provision should be made of at least 2 ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 people, including:

- No person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of natural green space;
- There should be at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km from home;
- There should be one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km;
- There should be one accessible 500 ha site within 10km.

In addition, Natural England is actively encouraging the declaration of more LNRs and recommends there be 1 ha of LNR per 1,000 people in urban areas.

LNRs are sites that are important for people and wildlife that provide a focus

for community involvement and educational activities.

### Current Situation

◇ Bristol has around 887 hectares of accessible natural green space, the majority of which is owned and managed by Bristol City Council. This equates to 2.2 ha of natural green space per 1,000 people, exceeding Natural England's recommendation of 2 ha per 1,000 people.

◇ Research undertaken for the Parks and Green Space Strategy indicates that people in Bristol are willing to travel up to 18 minutes (700 metres) by foot to reach an area of natural green space. This distance has been adopted as the Bristol Standard for accessible natural green space.

◇ Bristol currently has just 0.23 ha of LNRs per 1,000 people.

◇ Currently, there are four LNRs in Bristol, all of which are owned by the Council: Royate Hill, Stockwood Open Space, Troopers Hill and Lawrence Weston Moor. Three of these are managed in partnership with AWT. A further three LNRs are due to be designated at Badock's Wood, Eastwood Farm and Manor Woods Valley.

◇ The new LNR based project continuing from Wildspace is 'Nature in the City', funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Neighbourhood Renewal and runs until August 2008. The aims of the project are to expand the LNR network, with particular emphasis on disadvantaged areas of the city and encouraging community involvement.

◇ Local groups actively supported a wide variety of wildlife sites in parks and green spaces. Activities include carrying out practical work, recording wildlife, developing guides and running education activities. Examples include

Malago Valley Conservation Group and Friends of Old Sneed Park.

◇ Communities have also become involved in contributing their ideas to nature conservation led open space consultations and development. Examples include the Northern Slopes Initiative, which enabled local people to have their say in the future of open spaces in Knowle. Elsewhere, broader parks consultations such as for Eastville Park have also provided the opportunity for communities to discuss and influence nature conservation issues.

◇ Several important local wildlife sites in Bristol have been saved from development and acquired by the city council as a result of action by local people e.g. Narrowways Junction and Royate Hill. Elsewhere, groups are campaigning more widely for improvements to their local environment e.g. the Estuary Wildlife and the Sustainable Southville Campaigns.

### **Key Issues**

◆ Bristol Parks is keen to engage with local communities who wish to make decisions about, or become practically involved, in their local park or area of green space. The Community Park Managers (CPMs) are central to this role in supporting existing or new groups. Colleagues in the Natural Environment Team are available to support CPMs where there is a wildlife interest. However, the capacity of existing officers to fully engage with community groups is limited, and hence it is proposed to focus attention on an expanded and fully supported network of LNRs.

◆ Bristol Parks is currently committed to declaring three new LNRs. In continuing the focus and benefits of this work, it is proposed to establish a network of up to 16 LNRs distributed as evenly as possible across the city. With up to 16 LNRs it is expected that Bristol will meet or exceed provision guidance given by Natural England.

◆ It is important that LNRs are not just designated in name only, but are adequately supported by LNR Officers. Their role will be to support community involvement, undertake wildlife

education and ensure the highest standards for nature conservation management. Based on current experience, two LNR officers would be needed to serve the interests of a network of 16 LNRs.

# WILDLIFE FOR EVERYONE

## ◆ COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

| Action Point   | Time-table         | Target   | Staff Resources                |                  | Financial Resources (if known)              | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels   |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------|---|---|
|  |                    |  | Natural Environment Team       | Others           |   |   |
| <p><b>Declare 12 new LNRs across the city as a focus for supporting and encouraging community involvement on sites that have the highest quality management for wildlife.</b></p> <p><b>Target of 16 LNRs broadly in line with Natural England's guidelines of 1 ha of LNR per 1000 population in urban areas.</b></p> <p><b>Four LNRs in Bristol currently equates to 0.23 ha of LNR per 1000 population.</b></p> | 2007<br><br>2010   | 12 new LNRs by 2010  | LNR officer f/t until end 2005 | NE               | Designation minimal                         | <p>Further develop site selection criteria based on criteria developed under English Nature's (now Natural England) Wildspace! Project.</p> <p>Three sites in process of being declared as LNRs:<br/>Manor Woods Valley<br/>Badock's Wood<br/>Eastwood Farm</p> |
| <p><b>Current LNR Officer post made permanent from September 2008 (managing 8 LNRs)</b></p> <p><b>Appoint second LNR to manage expanded LNR network (declaring and managing further 8 LNRs)</b></p>  | 2008<br><br>2008 - | Two f/t permanent LNR Officers in post from September 2008   |                                |                  | £60,000/pa                                  | Wildspace Project replaced by Nature in the City Project from September 2008 (2-year funding from HLF and Neighbourhood Renewal)  |
| <p><b>Action to achieve provision standard for accessible' natural green space</b></p> <p>➤ <b>All Bristol's resident to have access to an area of natural green space within 700 metres of their home</b></p> <p>➤ <b>(Stretch target) All Bristol's resident to have access to an area of natural green space within 300 metres of their home (English Nature recommended provision)</b></p>                     | 2012<br><br>2020   | <p>Conversion of land to natural green space</p> <p>As above, but likely introduction of wildlife features (wildflowers, bird boxes, trees where space is limited)</p> | To be determined               | To be determined | To be determined (linked to actions in 5.2) | Natural green space mapped and areas of under-provision identified.   |



Section  
6.2

## EDUCATION & PROMOTION



messing about on the water



a close inspection



A prize catch

### Policy objective

**Bristol Parks will raise awareness and people's enjoyment and understanding of wildlife in Bristol, focussing on parks and green spaces and seeking innovative and imaginative ways to engage with local people.**

### Background

People enjoy seeing wildlife and would often like to know more about it. On-site interpretation, leaflets and events are examples of achieving this. However, recent experience through the Wildspace LNR project has shown that whilst the traditional notice board may be the easiest way to display information it is not always the best. More innovative community led interpretation projects have resulted in different approaches which have suffered less vandalism because they are more valued by local people.

### Current Situation

- ◇ Generally, there is a lack of readily available information about most of our parks and green spaces, including about their wildlife.
- ◇ Wildlife based interpretation signs and leaflets exist for a number of sites including Troopers Hill, Stockwood Open Space, Brandon Hill and the Downs.
- ◇ The Bristol Parks web site contains good information, but more comprehensive information is needed.
- ◇ The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project has been very successful in promoting the wildlife of the Gorge and Downs through walks, talks, courses, events and development of promotional materials such as displays, new notice boards, leaflets and postcards.
- ◇ The Wildspace Project LNR Officer has been successfully working with local communities and schools to help develop on-site interpretation and other promotional and educational activities appropriate to the needs of local people.

◇ Other organisations have produced excellent promotional guides encouraging people to find and enjoy wildlife in the city, for example the City Centre Nature Trail produced by AWT.

◇ Local groups have organised events and activities in parks, producing their own wildlife publications. For example, Malago Vale Conservation Group run guided walks and produced the 'Our Manor Woods' booklet. Friends of Troopers Hill have developed an excellent website.

◇ Bristol University and City of Bristol College run student field courses on some SNCIs.

### Key Issues

- ◆ A review of all the provision of on-site interpretation in Bristol's parks and green spaces is needed, including information about wildlife.
- ◆ Basic fact sheets should be produced for all SNCIs promoting the site and its wildlife interests. For some sites more comprehensive information should be made available.
- ◆ The community-focussed work within the expanded network of LNRs (see Section 6.1) will deliver innovative and imaginative ways of promoting interest and enjoyment of LNRs, including building long-term relationships with schools.

Events and activities are very popular with local people, and are a key promotional tool. The expanded LNR network (see Section 6.1) will afford an excellent opportunity to work with more communities across Bristol.

◆ Parks has an excellent opportunity to expand its educational role through the appointment of an Education Officer, working across the whole service.

# WILDLIFE FOR EVERYONE

## ◆ Education and Promotion

| Action Point  | Time-table                    | Target  | Staff Resources          |   | Financial Resources (if known)                        | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|---|---|
|   |                               |   | Natural Environment Team | Others  |   |   |
| <b>Develop fact sheets for all SNCIs, reflecting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Importance</li> <li>➤ Features</li> <li>➤ Access</li> <li>➤ Education</li> <li>➤ Designations (LNRs, SSSI)</li> </ul> <p>Important to ensure that fact sheets integrated with 'whole site' i.e. are not just wildlife based, and integrate with Bristol Parks web page</p> | 2008                          | All SNCIs with fact sheets  | 20 days                  | Marketing Officer<br>BRERC                          | ?<br>Depends on standard of publication               | No progress   |
| <b>Up-date the existing leaflet 'Bristol's Biodiversity'</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Link to Bristol BAP</li> </ul>  | 2008                          | Completed leaflet   | 6 days                   | Marketing Officer<br>BRERC                          | £3,000  | No progress   |
| <b>Within expanded LNR network undertake community focussed work:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Determine appropriate promotional material / signs / art etc</li> <li>➤ Determine and run appropriate events programme</li> <li>➤ Develop long-term relationships with schools and deliver educational work with school children.</li> </ul>               | Linked to designation of LNRs | All LNRs (target 16) with appropriate promotional material, events programme and schools educational programme. | F/t two LNR Officers     | CPM   | £5,000<br><br>annual promotional / educational budget | Outputs of current LNR Officer working in seven LNRs            |
| <b>Bristol Parks to appoint Education Officer to deliver education work across the service with links to wildlife and focussed work of LNR Officer and CPMs</b>   | 2008                          | Officer appointed   |                          | CPM<br>LNR<br>Officers<br>Community<br>Dev. Officer | £30,000/pa<br><br>Plus budget                         | No progress   |

## MONITORING & INDICATORS FOR BIODIVERSITY

Monitoring of biodiversity, including the use of indicators, is needed to tell us how well we are doing in maintaining and enhancing our sites for wildlife and in helping to meet people's expectations.

### SURVEYS AND MONITORING

#### Policy objective

**Bristol Parks will adopt an effective wildlife survey and monitoring programme based on key indicators for sites, species, habitats and customer satisfaction.**

#### Background

Ecological surveys provide vital information about the status of species and habitats, and tell us whether site management is positively contributing to ecological quality. Equally, surveys that test customer interest, understanding and satisfaction levels of natural green space informs site management and approaches to community engagement.

#### Current Situation

Up-to-date ecological survey information is available for some sites, species and habitats. This has been collected over a number of years for different purposes and by different organisations, including Bristol City Council, charities, independent volunteers, consultants and specialists

Data collected by Bristol City Council is held at the Bristol Region Environmental Records Centre (BRERC). Other organisations and individuals are also encouraged to deposit data with BRERC. This enables BRERC to provide a central repository for wildlife data and to hold millions of records for the ex-Avon region, which are made available to data users for conservation purposes.

There is an on-going programme of surveying SNCIs across the city to review their SNCI status.

#### Key Issues

All SNCIs should be re-surveyed every five-years on a rolling programme (surveying one fifth of

sites every year), to assess their condition and whether they still meet the SNCI designation criteria and that information is up to date. Potential new SNCIs should also be surveyed and put forward for designation as appropriate. Sites most at risk, either from development or lack of management should be prioritised.

An audit to determine whether all SNCIs in Bristol are in favourable condition needs to be completed, and management recommendations acted upon to ensure that all SNCIs are in favourable condition by 2020. The condition audit will form part of the SNCI re-survey timetable.

Bristol Bird Watch has been highly successful in collecting data about wildlife in Bristol and contributes to Bristol's biodiversity headline indicator. The survey is due to run until 2010.

The Bristol Bird Watch should be extended to focus on bird populations found specifically within our parks and green spaces, being a direct means to measure the impact of management on these sites.

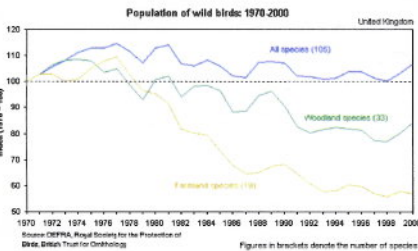
The development of BAPs for priority species and habitats will lead to the need for more survey and monitoring, e.g. monitoring water voles in Avonmouth (see Section 4.1).

It is important to consider who is best placed to carry out surveying and monitoring e.g. the Natural Environment Team, BRERC, external consultants, voluntary groups and students, and the general public.

All data should be copied to BRERC in an appropriate format for collation.

#### Use of Indicators

The following indicators for wildlife and customer satisfaction will be used in relation to the provision of natural



wild birds populations 1970-2000

#### Bird Surveying in Bristol

Bristol Birdwatch is a public participation project run by AWT in partnership with BCC. Local people record the numbers of birds seen in their gardens during the winter allowing a picture of bird populations across the city to be drawn up.

British Trust for Ornithology coordinate the work of keen amateur bird-watchers to record nesting bird populations. This data forms one of the sustainability indicators for DETL and the city council.

Questions about garden birds are included in the "Quality of Life" survey that goes out to many homes in the city.



Agrimony

green space managed by Bristol City Council. These will be in addition to the biodiversity indicators presented in the Quality of Life report:

**Headline**

- *Monitor an index of common bird populations in parks and green spaces. Needs an initial audit and target setting over 10 years.*

**Quality of natural green space**

- *All publicly accessible Sites of Nature Conservation Interest to be of favourable conservation status by 2020.*
- *Customer satisfaction with natural green space to be increased from current \*\*\*% to \*\*\*\*%. Needs an initial audit and target setting over 10 years.*

**Accessibility of natural green space**

- *All residents of Bristol to have at least one area of natural green space within 700 metres of their home.*
- *The number of local nature reserves to be increased to 16 from the current 4 designated and 3 proposed.*

## SURVEYS AND MONITORING

| Action Point   | Time-table       | Target  | Staff Resources          |   | Financial Resources (if known)               | Current progress towards targets within current resource levels                                       |
|--|------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--|---|
|  |                  |   | Natural Environment Team | Others                                    |  |   |
| <p><b>Undertake a rolling programme of all SNCI surveys, including those in Bristol Parks control:</b></p> <p>➤ <b>All SNCIs re-surveyed every 5-years on a rolling programme to assess their condition, whether they still meet the designation criteria and provide current information (this action is relevant to, but distinct from the favourable conservation assessments)</b></p> <p>See Appendix B for details of re-survey programme</p> | 2007 on          | Define survey programme                                 | 10 days per year         | Planning Dept.<br><br>External consultant | Needs costing                                | Ad hoc, about 3 sites per year<br><br>Includes favourable conservation status audit (see Section 5.1) |
| <b>Support Bristol Bird Watch</b>  | Annual           | Bristol bird watch run annually                         | 1day per year            | Local ornithologists                      | £1,000                                       | Bristol Bird Watch run for four years   |
| <p><b>Develop Bristol Parks Bird Watch</b></p> <p>➤ <b>Provides direct 'headline' indicator of the health of parks and green spaces</b></p>  | 2008 and ongoing | Parks Bird Watch launched                               | 5 days annually          | Local ornithologists                      | £2,000 launch<br><br>£1,000 subsequent years | No progress   |
| <b>Report on biodiversity indicators</b>   | 2008 annual      | Biodiversity indicators agreed and monitored as per BAP | To be determined         | To be determined                          | To be determined                             | To be determined  |

## RESOURCES FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

This strategy sets out an ambitious 5-year programme to ensure the effective planning and management of Bristol's parks and green spaces for wildlife. It also sets out proposals for promoting the understanding and enjoyment of wildlife to local people. Additional resources are required to deliver this programme.

This strategy identifies the 'headline' actions needed to deliver an effective nature conservation resource for the people of Bristol. The 'headline' actions are supported by numerous projects run by the Natural Environment Section within Bristol Parks.

Five new posts are identified as needed to deliver the headline actions within this strategy:

- 1) A biodiversity officer to implement the Bristol BAP (Action Table 4.1);
- 2) A Nature Conservation Officer to deal with nature conservation related planning issues (Action Table 4.2);
- 3) Two LNR Officers to support the expanded network of 16 LNRs. Including making the current externally funded LNR Officer to be made permanent after August 2008 (Action Table 6.1), and
- 4) A Bristol Parks Education Officer to develop a wider programme of parks related education with links to wildlife. With education activities delivered, in part, through enhanced site presence including Site Rangers (Action Table 6.2).

The planning support officer is particularly needed to release the two full time Nature Conservation Officers from planning related work, which currently occupies over 50% of their time. Without this post, a significant amount of officer time that should be available to implement actions within parks will be drawn away into non-parks related work. The Planning Department is being approached to investigate if new resources can be made available to finance this new post.

Further resources will be needed to fund the four other posts highlighted above. There may be some opportunities for external funding (most likely in part) for these posts.

The costings have not taken into account any funding of nature conservation on the ground. At present approximately £70,000 is spent on nature conservation specifications in Bristol Parks, however with the development and implementation of new management plans this is likely to increase. Funding of their management will need to be calculated from the development of costed plans. In order for sites to reach 'favourable nature conservation status' it will be necessary to prioritise resources to ensure that the implementation of management plans can be achieved, again much of site management will need funding through the operations budget.

The Avon Wildlife Trust and community groups have been active in generating new resources for sites, e.g. the trust's HLF1 monies which funded capital works on Bristol Parks owned nature reserves. Liaison should continue with these groups to see where there are opportunities for new income. Other funding sources should also be looked into for capital works to sites where these are highlighted in new management plans for sites.

The Parks and Green Space strategy identifies an investment need for natural green space of some £8 million over the next 20 years.