



Rochford District Council

ROCHFORD DISTRICT

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Topic	Lead Partners	Proposed Action	Services Affected	Current and Recommended Action
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Mammals

Brown Hare	EWT, FWAG	1.1 Encourage local public surveys to raise the profile of this species.	Leisure/LA21	Consider the development of a survey in conjunction with lead partners.
Dormouse	EWT	2.1 Seek to ensure that PPG9 guidance issued by the DoE is taken into account by Highway Authorities and Local Authorities.	Local Plans, Planning and Engineering	Already taken into account - no new action necessary. New PPG9 guidance expected this year.
		2.2 Prioritise identified dormouse sites to target both the management of existing populations and WGS/CS to reconnect habitat on adjacent land (hedges and woodland). This is a long term aim beginning in 1998, but planning for the next 50 years.	Leisure, Planning and Local Plans	There are 28 hibernation/nesting boxes at two sites in Hockley Woods. These are monitored by the EWT. Obtain records, assess and prioritise potential sites. Use information for planning applications.
		2.3 Support and expand repeat surveys based on the Great Nut Hunt to provide data on County distribution. Target LNRs non-statutory nature reserves and LA land. Target = 1998 and 2/3 yearly intervals.	Leisure	Support Survey where undertaken on Rochford District Council land.
		2.4 Use the dormouse as a flagship species to explain the value of coppicing in woodlands. Target = 1998 onwards.	Leisure	Provide management advice for sites containing dormice where requested.
Harbour Porpoise	EWT	3.1 Ensure that all casualties are sent for post-mortem and tissue studies.		No new action necessary.

		3.2 Introduce speed limits and no-go areas to ensure the safe passage of the species.		Working with Essex Estuaries Partnership to consider options.
		3.3 Introduce a code of practice to reduce disturbance by other marine craft (Speedboats, etc).		Working with Essex Estuaries Partnership to consider options.
		3.4 Provide an advisory service to accompany any codes of best practice.	Leisure	Mechanism exists
Water Vole	EA/EWT	4.1 Include water voles, as a protected species, in development plan policies.	Local Plans	Mechanism exists
		4.2 Promote better awareness of water voles and their requirements amongst private land owners and managers.	Leisure	Distribute information provided by the EA and EWT.

Birds

Grey Partridge	RSPB	5.1 Review management of land owned or managed by BAP partner bodies for grey partridge and other farmland wildlife. Target = management practices reviewed considering grey partridge requirements by 2001.	Leisure	Obtain management advice from RSPB.
Skylark	RSPB	6.1 Review management of land owned by BAP partner bodies for Skylarks. Target = management practices on land owned by BAP partner reviewed in terms of Skylark requirements by 2001.	Leisure	Obtain management advice from RSPB
Song Thrush	RSPB	7.1 Ensure local authorities, landowners and managers are aware of the presence, legal status and conservation requirements of this species, and appropriate methods of habitat management. Target = disseminate information on song thrush habitat requirements and appropriate methods of habitat management.	Leisure	Obtain management advice from RSPB

		7.2 Encourage schools and people with gardens to put out food during cold winter spells as food for song thrushes. Target = publicity material to be distributed to local media and local authorities during cold winter spells.	Leisure	Obtain appropriate advice and promote through RDM.
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Other Vertebrates

Great Crested Newt	EN	8.1 Seek to ensure that all ponds known to hold viable populations of newts are reported to local authorities, and that the protection and enhancement of the ponds is taken into account in accordance with para 24 of DOE's Planning and Policy Guidance note: PPG9.	Leisure, Planning and Local Plans	Ensure records are kept and updated. Review communications with planning to ensure effectiveness.
		8.2 Encourage local authorities to demand a pond and surrounding habitat check when development is proposed on or near to a pond for which no details are currently held.	Planning	Review communications with planning.
		8.3 Promote favourable management where this species known to occur. This could be on private or public land and could involve communities possibly with grants from Rural Action and Essex Millennium Project. Consider applying for Countryside Stewardship grants to manage the habitat around suitable breeding sites.	Leisure/LA21	Information sent to land/pond owners and advice offered.
		8.4 Seek to maintain the number and distribution of occupied sites through habitat restoration or creation of sufficient new sites near existing ones to compensate for local losses.	Planning, Leisure	At present RDC determines whether mitigation strategies are satisfactory. Consider adopting new policy in Local Plan to ensure any lost sites are replaced.
		8.5 Pass on any information regarding known sites to the relevant local authorities and records centre.	Leisure, Planning	Mechanism exists.
		8.6 Promote training for others involved in the	Leisure	Work with EN as required.

		management of great crested newt habitats.		
		8.7 The first action must be to carry out a county wide pond survey to identify sites supporting great crested newts and other amphibians ¹ . Also ensure that information on the habitats surrounding the ponds are surveyed and monitored.	Leisure	Currently being undertaken (LA21)

1 and including slow worms and adders

Invertebrates

Heath Fritillary	BC/EN	9.1 Ensure that any sites that hold colonies are protected to a degree that will enable long term sympathetic management. This protection may include SSSI notification or reserve acquisition.	Leisure	Species recovery programme in Hockley woods is in its second year.
		9.2 Promote the uptake of financial incentives available for the management of woodlands, to continue and extend coppice management in the butterfly's former range in Essex, and encourage the market for coppice produce.	Leisure	The species recovery programme is approved and funded by EN to maintain and enhance populations through agreed coppice management.

Trees and Plants

Native Black Poplar	DVSVP/ EWT	10.1 Ensure all local authorities and Environment Agency receive information on the local status of the trees within Essex or their district in the form of a county assessment containing known native black poplars and a map of their locations. Local authority's to serve TPOs where it is felt trees are under threat or are of particular importance for landscape or genetic value. The EA has a particularly important role to play in the future of the Black Poplar in Essex as elsewhere. It carries out management of riverside	Leisure	Tree survey of all open spaces is being undertaken during the summer 2000. This will also assess the condition of the districts tree stock. Establish system for recording information. Note: County list does not yet
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		trees, it implements planting schemes along river corridors as part of its conservation and land management programmes and strongly influences planting policies on flood plains. It is essential that the EA becomes involved in black poplar conservation. Target = records to LAs and EA by 1999 and updated yearly.		exist.
		10.2 Ensure the continuity of sites of existing trees by planting adjacent cuttings or truncheons (unrooted 6' setts) where possible. Trees do snap off at the base, or even (rarely) uproot but both can regenerate from the stump. 'Impatient' replacements should therefore not be sited within double the diameter of the of the original tree. Target = ongoing.	Leisure	Work with EWT as required.
		10.3 Identify suitable new sites for planting within areas managed by conservation bodies and within CMP areas. Target = identify areas by 2000.	Leisure	Work with EWT as required
		10.4 Find a small number of suitable locations within river flood plains where collections of 10-30 male and female trees can be established in fairly close proximity, allowing for the possibility of natural seed to be produced. Hybrid trees in the vicinity should be removed to help prevent hybridisation. Target = 3 such colonies by 2005.	See 6.2.3	Work with EWT as required
		10.5 Add cuttings to the clone bank to ensure ex-situ conservation of genetic stock before mature trees are lost. Target = Ongoing when trees are discovered.	Leisure	Work with EWT as required.
		10.6 Test the DNA from all the current specimens in the clone bank. Target = 1999.		Work with EWT as required.
		10.7 Identify appropriate body or individual and establish a county nursery to complement the existing clone bank which would supply trees of known and appropriate provenance to landowners, retailers and		Work with EWT as required

		contractors. Target = by 2001.		
		10.8 Ensure landowners and managers are aware of the presence and importance of conserving this subspecies and appropriate methods of management and replacements. Target = ongoing.	Leisure	Work with EWT as required
		10.9 Advise landowners and managers on the best positions to site new cuttings, e.g. not in dry conditions, on roadsides, or females close to houses. Target = ongoing.	Leisure and Planning	Work with EWT as required
		10.11 Initiate a public awareness campaign for the tree and its recognition in the county, including articles and local media attention, but ensure that the need for careful and controlled planting is highlighted. Target = ongoing, at least one story in local media per year.	Leisure	Obtain appropriate advice and promote through RDM.

Habitats

Ancient or species rich hedgerows and green lanes.	ECC	11.1 Ensure that grant aid for the management, restoration and establishment of hedgerows and green lanes is available to farmers. As part of this process consider a standard payment for hedge works across all land management schemes to facilitate uptake and administration.	Leisure	At present, active liaison and enforcement in relation to the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations in the district. Information about funding is provided.
		11.2 Promote the uptake of and consider extending the scope of Environmentally Sensitive Area, countryside Stewardship and Landscape Conservation Programme grants for the management and restoration of ancient and/or species rich hedgerows and green lanes, for the planting of new hedgerows and for the establishment of hedgerow trees. When promoting the management and restoration of hedgerows and green lanes, priority should be given to those hedgerows which can be	Leisure/Forward Planning	Work with ECC as required.

		defined as important using the criteria in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.		
		11.3 Promote the use of practices that can protect hedgerows from fertilisers and pesticides such as Conservation Headlands and set-aside strips.		Work with ECC as required.
		11.4 Enforce the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, and ensure that any notifications involving the removal of trees are referred to the Forestry Authority	Leisure and Enforcement	Mechanisms in place
		11.5 Ensure that planning policies and development control decisions promote the protection and management of ancient and/or species rich hedgerows and green lanes within and around developments, and seek to minimise the adverse impacts on hedgerows of planning proposals.	Local Plans and Planning	Mechanisms in place
		11.6 Encourage the retention and favourable management of ancient and/or species rich hedgerows and green lanes that form an integral part of, enhance, or link Natura 2000 sites.	Local Plans, Planning and Leisure	Work with ECC as required
		11.7 Encourage favourable management of ancient and/or species rich roadside hedgerows, including favourable cutting practices and management of standards.	Local Plans, Planning and Leisure	Work with ECC as required.
		11.8 Develop hedge management skills through training for contractors and land owners, and distribute information on best management practices.	Leisure	Work with ECC as required
		11.9 Carry out survey work in order to establish registers of ancient and/or species rich hedgerows and green lanes.	Leisure	Work with ECC as required
		11.10 Involve parishes and local groups in monitoring local hedgerows. Ensure that these surveys are all carried out with the same methodology e.g. CoCo/CPRE.	Leisure	Work with ECC as required
		11.12 Continue to promote awareness amongst the	Leisure	Work with ECC as required

		public and land managers of the importance of hedgerows and their associated features for wildlife, of the continuing loss of hedgerows and for the need for management to maintain biodiversity.		
Ancient Woodland	ECC/BBC	12.1 Encourage the retention and favourable management of all ancient woodland sites.	Leisure and Local Plans	There are three ancient woodlands under RDC control, and seven more in private ownership within the district. All are under a woodland grant scheme for the promotion of wildlife and the provision of recreation.
		12.2 Local authorities to protect and manage their ancient woodland sites.	Leisure	As above.
		12.3 Where appropriate form Deer Management Groups.		No action
		12.4 Develop more detailed management guidance for woodlands of different stand types	Leisure	Management plans exist
		12.5 Prepare Strategy for the County amongst which will be included a detailed up to date inventory of woodland in Essex to provide baseline data for the future.		Work with ECC as required
Coastal Grazing Marsh	EN	13.1 Ensure that local planning restrictions, WS designations and other, non-statutory protective measures are applied to remaining CGM sites.	Local Plans and Planning	Working with Essex Estuaries Partnership to consider options
		13.2 Ensure that county structure plan, shoreline management plan and estuary management plans acknowledge the importance of coastal grazing marshes and allow for their maintenance and development.	Local Plans	Country function. Working with Essex Estuaries Partnership.
Seagrass Beds	EN	14.1 Produce articles in newsletters and journals to increase awareness and understanding of the Essex seagrass resource and biodiversity action process.	Leisure/LA21	Obtain advice and promote through RDM where appropriate

		14.2 Provide interpretative material for key sites		Work with EN as required
Saline Lagoons	EN	15.1 Continue to take full account of lagoonal habitats in the planning, funding and implementation of sea defence works.	Engineering and Planning	Work with EN as required
		15.2 Continue development of Shoreline Management Plan, and inclusion of lagoonal habitats as a key feature to be maintained and enhanced.	Leisure	Work with EN as required
Urban Areas	EN	16.1 Survey urban areas to identify WS/RIGGS, green space and green corridors. Target = by 2001 and then every 5-10 years. Costs = as part of systematic survey of Essex.	Leisure	Work with EN as required to provide district information
		16.2 Undertake public surveys of 'urban' species and habitats involving schools, community groups and the general public. Target = One public survey per year.	Leisure/LA21	Work with EN as required
		16.3 Assess levels of natural and accessible open space, identify deficiency areas (as defined using EN criteria) and monitor changes in levels. Target = by 2001. Monitor levels of accessible natural open space every 5 years.	Leisure and Local Plans	Work with EN as required. Initial meetings have been held.
		16.4 Protection, mitigation and management policies are required in development plans to counter development pressures in urban areas and sustain a viable natural resource. All reviewed Local Plans Supplementary Planning Guidance (e.g. Nature Conservation Strategy) to include the following in forthcoming local plan reviews: 1. The identification and protection of statutory wildlife sites and WS, RIGGS, natural networks and wildlife features within urban areas. 2. Retention, management and enhancement of	Local Plans and Leisure	Obtain management advice, and work with EN as required. To be included in local plan review process. There are six Local Nature Reserves, on long-term lease to Parish Councils. These all have management plans.

		<p>habitats related to new developments, through planning agreements</p> <p>3. Mitigation/replacement of lost habitats to maintain net ecological resource (identifying truly re-creatable habitats versus irreplaceable habitats)</p> <p>4. Positive management of land within LA ownership.</p> <p>5. Provision of Local Nature Reserves and accessible natural open space to recommend levels (EN, 1996)</p> <p>6. Statement of intent to support EBAP targets and plans.</p>		
		16.5 Develop and implement a long-term strategy for land use and land management in all major urban areas - to maintain and improve natural networks of wildlife sites and green space. Target = as supplementary planning guidance for next Local Plan Review or by 2004. Review every 10 years.	Leisure/Forward Planning	Work with EN as required, and consider including in Local Plan review process.
		16.6 Lobby Town and Country Planning Institute to include biodiversity issues / ecological design / wildlife law into planners' syllabus. Target = ongoing.	Forward planning/Planning	Work with EN as required
		16.7 Hold a county / regional conference for urban land managers and conservation organisations about biodiversity and best practice on site management and public participation. Target = Every 2 years.	Leisure	Work with EN as required
		16.8 Set up demonstration projects in accessible areas, showing and interpreting land management	Leisure	Work with EN as required

		(coppice, hedge laying, heathland / grassland restoration and hay making etc.). For example in town centre formal parks and LNRs. Target = 1 in every town by 2000.		
		16.9 Seek opportunities for increased promotion and participation in urban wildlife, through interpretation of sites (especially LNRs and WS), events, publicity, guided walks etc. Target = 2 interpretation schemes within each urban area by 2003.	Leisure	At present there are monthly guided walks in the Council woods. All Council owned woodlands have information leaflets. Work with EN as required.
		16.10 Develop local groups for all LNR's and LA owned CWS to promote better communication between users and managers, especially regarding land management. Target = all urban LNR's to have an active group by 2 years after declaration.	Leisure	There are six Local Nature Reserves, on long-term lease to parish councils. These all have management plans.
		16.11 Develop a network of voluntary wildlife wardens, within urban areas, to increase communication between the public and site managers. Provide 'training' and liaison with appropriate local authority conservation staff. Target = one scheme per major urban area by 2005.	Leisure	Within the Council's woodlands, there are four voluntary full time workers who receive on-going training.
		16.12 Promote biodiversity issues within all existing LA21 groups, to offer opportunities for local people to develop urban wildlife projects and integrate biodiversity into other community initiated plans. Target = by 2001.	LA21	Biodiversity identified as an important issue by the Local Agenda 21 Forum. Group can be contacted for wildlife projects as they are developed.
		16.13 Local authorities to establish wildlife forums (urban or district wide) to develop local wildlife priorities and feedback on action for biodiversity. Target = by 1999 at least 1 per local authority district.	Leisure	As above.

Flagship Species for the Rochford District:

- Heath fritillary
- Common cow wheat
- Hornbeam
- Wild service tree

Abbreviations/Acronyms:

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	LA	Local Authority
BBC	Brentwood Borough Council	LA21	Local Agenda 21
BC	Butterfly Conservation	LEAP	Local Environment Agency Plan
BCT	Bat Conservation Trust	LNR	Local Nature Reserve
BRC	Biological Records Centre	NCC	Nature Conservancy Council
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	NNR	National Nature Reserve
CBC	Colchester Borough Council	NT	National Trust
CLA	Country Landowners Association	RCC	Rural Community Council
CMP	Countryside Management Projects	RIGGS	Regionally Important Geological or geomorphological Site
CMS	Countryside Management Schemes	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Schemes	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
DOE	Department for the Environment	SPA	Special Protection Area
DVSVP	Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
EA	Environmental Agency	TPO	Tree Preservation Order
EARG	Essex Amphibian and Reptile Group	WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
EBG	Essex Bat Group	WS	Wildlife Sites (formerly known as SINC's)
ECC	Essex County Council		
EN	English Nature		
EMG	Essex Moth Group		
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area		
EWT	Essex Wildlife Trust		
FA	Forestry Authority		
FC	Forestry Commission		
FWAG	Farming Advisory Wildlife Group		
GIS	Geographic Information System		