



London Biodiversity Partnership Annual Report 2003 - 2004



Chair's Foreword

It seems a long time since the Partnership was set up in 1996 for the benefit of London's wildlife and people. Much progress has been made in the last eight years. On the upside, the Partnership has secured a central place in regional policy delivery. We've produced a large portfolio of plans, generating positive relationships within the nature conservation sector and with others outside it that were previously disengaged. We're seeing real action on the ground, as outlined in this Annual Report and we have achieved recognition across the UK for our successes.

The downside? Wildlife in London still faces major challenges from development, inappropriate management and lack of awareness. We're only just beginning to engage some key players – particularly from the business sector. We have to be honest about these threats, and find new ways to tackle them.

Our ability to shift up a gear rests on the continued hard work of our members and, as laid out in our Business Plan, new resources for our secretariat. I look forward to celebrating more successes next year.

James Farrell

Chair,

London Biodiversity Partnership Project Board

Introduction to the Partnership

The London Biodiversity Partnership was established in response to the Rio Convention and the publication of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. We aim to conserve and enhance the capital's habitats and species for present and future generations to benefit from and enjoy. There are now 31 Action Plans to guide our work: 11 habitats, 12 species, and 8 Generic Action Plans covering cross-cutting issues. There are also informative 'Statements' for the house martin, 'humble bumble' and London's exotic flora.

As a partnership of public, private, voluntary organisations and some individuals we work together by pooling resources, applying for funding together, and by delivering our work through the various member organisations and their activities. By bringing partners on board from sectors not traditionally thought of as relevant to conservation, the Partnership aims to broaden the impact of its work, encouraging others to modify their activities so that they benefit biodiversity.

Milestones

1996

- Partnership launched
- Document Capital Assets published

1999

- Appointment of the first Project Officer

2000

- *The Audit* - Vol 1 published
- *Our Green Capital* published
- Launch of website with an online searchable species audit

2001

- *The Action* - Vol 2 Round 1 Action Plans published
- First Heathland Forum
- Chalking Up London's Downs Project

2002

- *The Action* - Round 2 Action Plans published
- London Bird Conference
- House Sparrow Survey
- First Grey Heron Day

2003

- First Mistletoe transplants across London
- Wildlife Gardening Day
- First Parks, Squares & Amenity Grasslands seminar
- Launch of Funding Strategy
- Review of Round 1 Action Plans commence
- London Biodiversity Partnership and London Biodiversity Records Centre – 'Working Together' report published

2004

- *The Action* - Round 3 of Action Plans published
- Publication of Business Plan
- Launch of 'Design for Biodiversity'
- Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL) is formed
- Capital Woodlands project planning phase begins



Protecting London's Priority Habitats and Species

2003-4 has certainly been a busy year for the Partnership. Thousands of Londoners have been introduced to wildlife activities, with subjects as varied as watching grey herons tend to their voracious offspring, to London's bats.

Expert advice has been debated and published for various habitats and an elegant booklet has been produced on encouraging biodiversity in the built environment. Several steering groups have been successful in accessing funds for conservation projects. The Woodland Group is well on its way towards achieving a major grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Capital Woodlands project.

Green roofs have been specially installed for black redstarts and nesting banks have been built for sand martins – the one at WWT's the London Wetland Centre has already been occupied. But will the others attract tenants and how far can 'engineering for biodiversity' deliver results? We are working to make sure our energy and enthusiasm leads to real change where it is most needed – where Londoners can enjoy the benefits.



Metatanguage Design

Canals

The working group, led by British Waterways, has helped to identify suitable sites for habitat creation and or enhancement at Borough level in Islington, Camden, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Enfield and parts of Westminster. British Waterways London has continued its ongoing environmental assessment for maintenance, management and development works affecting the canal corridor and associated habitats.

Sand Martin

Two artificial sand martin banks were created during 2003. Thames Water and Sutton Council constructed a large artificial bank with 344 holes at Beddington Farmlands. The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust created a large nesting site at the Wetland Centre that was quickly colonised, and so far 10 pairs have been recorded nesting there. The RSPB has led this species action plan since its launch in 2001.



William Moreno

Water Vole

RSPB Rye Meads Nature Reserve in Hertfordshire undertook targeted mink control in December 2003 in order to protect a significant London water vole population in the upper Lee Valley. Following the successful capture of 4 mink in late summer 2003, the trapping area was extended last spring to include the lower Colne area from the Thames confluence to Rickmansworth. This was undertaken specifically for the protection of important water vole populations in this area. Funds from the Environment Agency have been used to purchase 43 mink traps and these will be loaned via the water vole project to river keepers and angling society bailiffs. Specialist training will be made available by the water vole Project Officer for a team of volunteer trappers from local fishing syndicates. The London Wildlife Trust is the lead organisation for this action plan.



Natural History Museum

Private Gardens

'The Wildlife Gardening Day - Conference and Fayre' took place at the Natural History Museum in July 2003. The aim was to encourage wildlife gardening and provide the general public with the opportunity to obtain expert information from members of the Working Group. The conference, led by London Wildlife Trust and the Natural History Museum, was very well attended. Organisations including Royal Parks, Gardening Which? London Natural History Society, Pesticide Action Network and the Greater London Authority gave talks and workshops.

There was also a guided tour of the Museum's wildlife garden with David Bellamy, which proved to be very popular. This action plan is led by London Wildlife Trust.



Derek Brown

Black Redstart

A 3 year PhD research project began to gather information on green roofs and their biodiversity. This study delivers a key part of the action plan and it includes in-depth monitoring of the flora and fauna of a number of wasteland habitats across London.

Records of proposed and newly created green roofs suitable for black redstarts have been kept since 2001. So far approximately 30,000m² of green roofs have been included in development briefs and recently Camden Council has earmarked 15% of the surface area of the new Kings Cross regeneration scheme to have green roofs designed for black redstarts and other species of conservation interest. Dusty Gedge currently leads this action plan on behalf of the London Wildlife Trust.

6 Providing Guidance and Advice

Providing guidance and advice is an integral part of our work. We have produced a series of documents that assist in identifying biodiversity priorities and taking action in London. Private businesses, local authorities and developers are just some of the beneficiaries of the work produced by our working groups and the advice offered by the Project Officer.

Our seminars and workshops are a popular forum for dialogue between various interest groups, sharing crucial best practice on issues ranging from habitat management to securing funding.

In 2004 the Partnership joined forces with English Nature, the Greater London Authority and the London Development Agency to produce and promote guidance on sustainable building design taking biodiversity into consideration. As conservation and enhancement of biodiversity resources in London is a key theme of the Mayor London Plan, the work of our newly launched Built Structures Working Group, will make a direct contribution towards facilitating the building and construction industry with guidance on incorporating biodiversity into their developments.



Wildlife for All

Parks, Squares and Amenity Grassland

The group led by the Greater London Authority acts as the Biodiversity Working Group of the London Parks and Greenspaces Forum and its key objective is to promote best practice for biodiversity within the wider agenda for parks. The group has organised a series of seminars, including guidance on contract specifications, the Green Flag Award Scheme and the BTO's research project on birds in London's parks and green spaces. The seminars are proving very popular,

bringing together ecologists, senior parks management personnel, government agencies and the private sector to share ideas and experience. The group contributed to an international conference 'Great Parks, Great Cities', organising a tour of London parks which illustrate best practice for biodiversity, linked by a boat trip along the Regent's Canal, as well as a workshop around the theme 'Parks for People and Nature'.



Environment Agency



Mike Waite/GLA



Mike Waite/GLA



Mike Waite/GLA



Mathew Frith

Acid Grassland

A draft best practice document was produced and distributed to land managers attending the one-day workshop for golf course managers 'Managing the Rough for Golf and Wildlife'. This was organised in partnership with the Heathland Working Group in February 2004. The scope of the booklet has been expanded to include introductory advice on grazing management and cutting machinery. The working group intends to publish this document later this year once additional funding is obtained. The Royal Parks lead this action plan.

Heathlands

The production of the Best Practice Habitat Guidelines for Managers has been delayed until later in the year as much generic guidance has already been produced by other organisations. A Heathland Recovery Strategy to review Greater London's heathland resources and their management and to explore the feasibility of restoring and creating new sites will shortly be produced by the Greater London Authority. The strategy will also recommend a costed, prioritised program for its implementation. This habitat action plan is led by English Nature.

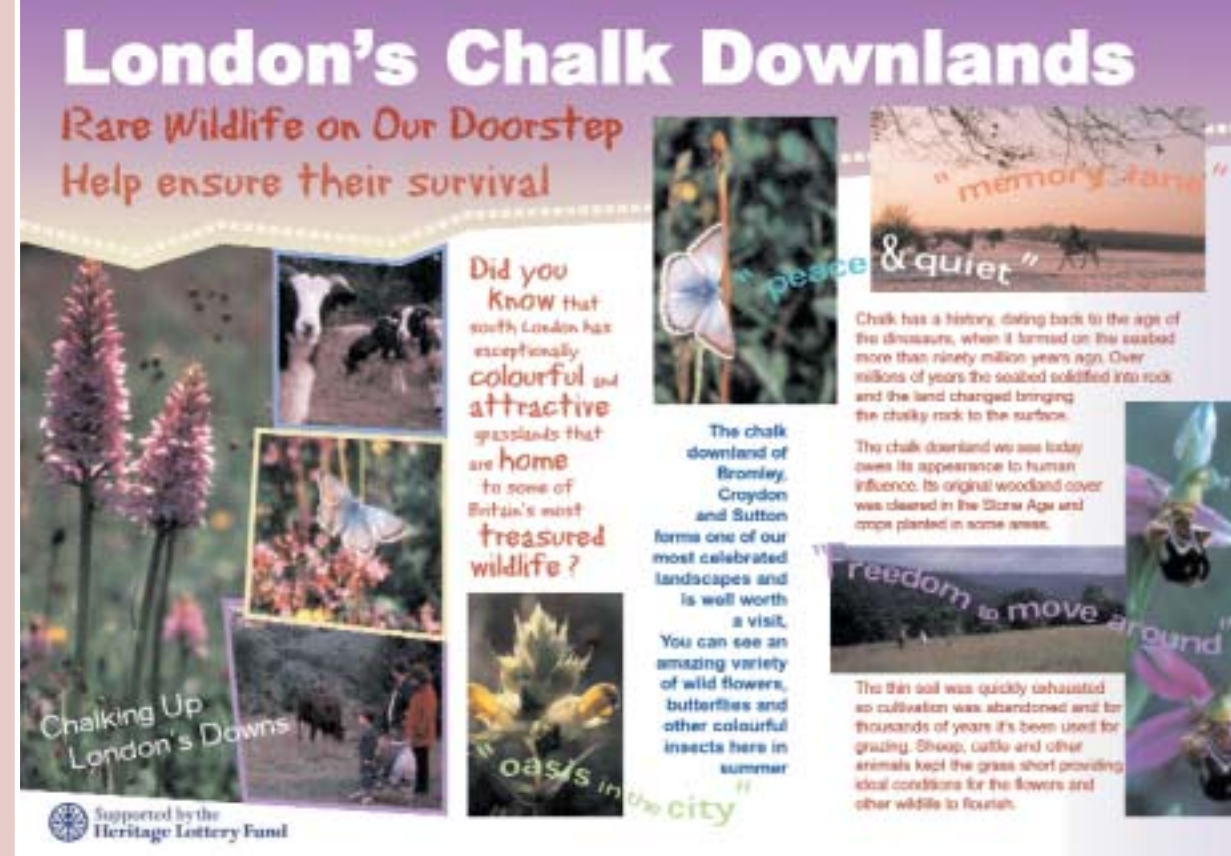


Will Atkins

Public Awareness and Participation

The Partnership recognises that biodiversity conservation efforts can amount to nothing without understanding and support from the general public. All Habitat and Species Action Plans have targeted objectives which aim to raise public awareness, and provide new opportunities for involvement with biodiversity. The Partnership is fortunate to be comprised of organisations with vast experience in communicating biodiversity issues to the public. During 2003-04 promotional efforts have increased through leaflets, training events, nature walks, press releases and media coverage.

The Communications working group has developed www.lbp.org.uk as a powerful tool to raise awareness of the biodiversity process in London. We have widened our target audience by including accessibility functions that make navigation through the site easier for those with basic Internet access, or people with disabilities.



Promotional leaflets and training

Chalk Grassland

The 'Chalking Up London Downlands' project carried out a series of training sessions for the public on butterflies, moths and wildflower identification. Two leaflets, 'Enjoy London's Chalk Downland' and 'Walk the Chalk' were published to highlight the historical development and the natural value of chalk downlands and how the public can get involved in conserving this precious habitat. 'Walk the Chalk' opens out to reveal maps and information about key sites in south London to visit. London Wildlife Trust leads this plan.



Mike Waite

An update of the Partnership's Funding Strategy is planned for 2005 in line with the review of all habitat and species action plans. The funding strategy is an essential tool for future fundraising activities as it allocates costs to specific actions and allows the Partnership to maintain a global overview of their funding needs.



Chris Strachan

Water Vole

A grant was received from Carillion (£4,200, January 2004) for habitat enhancement and creation work at London Wildlife Trust's Spencer Road Wetlands in Hackbridge. A number of trees have been cleared in preparation for the creation of a new ditch and pond.

Funding has been secured for the Lower Colne via Environment Agency Conservation and Fisheries (£5,000 in March 2004) and it will be used to set up a mink raft.



William Moreno



Mathew Frith

Woodlands

The Woodlands HAP group submitted a project development grant bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to prepare the Capital Woodlands Project. This project aims to raise appreciation of London's woodlands, increase public benefit and participation, and demonstrate good practice by undertaking access, biodiversity, community and training work in six 'flagship' woodlands as well as more generally across the capital through a pan-London programme. The key objective of the project development phase is to identify an effective and achievable programme of activity, based on wide consultation that will directly advance the aim of the Capital Woodlands Project. A Project Officer based at the offices of Trees for Cities will be employed to take the project forward.

Our Key Challenges for Next Year

- Obtaining funds for core Partnership activities and for Action Plan implementation is one of our key challenges for 2005. We hope to acquire the necessary funds to employ a Funding Facilitator who will provide advice and support to Action Plan Leads when seeking funds, and attract much needed funds to expand our secretariat and increase the support the Project Officer provides. Some key actions, such as the commissioning of new research into the impacts of light pollution on urban bat behaviour, have yet to see much progress due to lack of funds. Actions planned for 2005, such as the successful implementation of the Heathland Restoration Strategy, depend on the advice and support provided by the Funding Facilitator.

- Dissemination of good practice, providing sound advice and increasing synergies with key organisations is another crucial challenge for the coming year. The production and distribution of advice notes is not the end of our work, but the beginning of a dialogue between working groups and organisations that have a role to play in conserving biodiversity.

- One of our challenges at the local level is to encourage the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans and promote their integration into the Community Strategies.



William Moreno



Mathew Frith

www.lbp.org.uk

Our website has been revamped to allow easier access to information. New sections such as a web library and glossary have been included. The site receives over 500 hits per week from a mixture of practitioners, academics and members of the public and soon after its launch it won the '2004 Web Smarty Award' for its innovative design and user friendly navigation. We expect the website to gradually expand as new action plans develop and more documents related to the biodiversity process are published.



Action Plan Review

A new Built Structures Generic Action Plan, launched in 2004, is being implemented by a Working Group including representatives of livingroofs.org, Peabody Trust, and London's Swifts. Much activity is planned for the next three years including collating additional evidence on the biodiversity benefits of green roofs, walls and other approaches to designing for biodiversity. The Working Group also plans to develop a suite of training events for developers, architects, designers and planners to follow up the launch of the 'Design for Biodiversity' guidance document.

We aim to ensure that the Partnership's built structure issues are represented in the new independent website dedicated to green roofs; www.livingroofs.org.uk



Amanda Ferguson/London Zoo

A Reedbeds Habitat Action Plan was launched earlier in 2004 to ensure the protection and good management of reedbeds in Greater London. A Working Group led by the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust has been set up and in the next three years will demonstrate, through targeted actions, the value of reedbeds as key habitat for regionally uncommon wildlife and their use as an alternative water treatment system.

Also as part of the review process of Round 1 Action Plans, the Environment Agency conducted an audit of London's Rivers and Streams. The audit provides a brief profile of some of the free flowing watercourses above the tidal limit and identifies the threats and opportunities currently facing the habitat. The working group led by the Environment Agency is working towards developing a Rivers and Streams Habitat Action Plan.



Environment Agency

Progress at Borough Level

Since the publication of last year's annual report, the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Havering published their Local Biodiversity Action Plans and all boroughs, apart from Croydon and Harrow, are now engaged in action planning or implementation. The London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum continues to provide support and information to council officers engaged in the biodiversity process. During the past year the forum has hosted talks on biodiversity performance indicators, local wildlife crime networks and the BTO London birds survey, among others. The Forum has also provided an invaluable contribution towards the production of our business plan and the development stage of the Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL).

In September 2003 the London Boroughs of Sutton, Bromley, Hounslow, Redbridge and Richmond, started work on the EU LIFE funded project-Sustainable Urban Planning Networks for Green Spaces or SUN. SUN will build on existing good practice to develop and test a series of innovative approaches to improving stakeholder involvement in urban green space planning and development. The processes developed will include stakeholder identification, urban planning for biodiversity strategy development, stakeholder awareness raising, stakeholder biodiversity action plan forum, stakeholder involvement in implementation of action plan projects and approaches to reporting. The project will end in August 2006.



C. M. Wright



Wildlife for All

Biological Records

In August 2003 a consultation exercise was conducted by the Partnership to establish the future relationship between our organisation and the proposed open space and biodiversity records centre for London. The final report clarified our relationship and recommended that both organisations should operate separately whilst maintaining close links. A shadow steering group was set up to work on the development phase and a new independent organisation is expected to be formed as a fully established records centre by 2006. The new organisation will expand the systems and data holdings built up over the last 7 years by the London Wildlife Trust's Biological Recording Project. The Partnership, as a member of shadow steering group, is committed to the creation of an effective independent records centre for London.



William Moreno

Finances



Contributions to the Partnership by organisation – April 03-March 04

Income

- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation: £32,240
- GLA: £8,851
- Jacobs Caterers: £100
- English Nature: £5,000
- Royal Parks: £5,000
- Environment Agency: £10,000

Total: £61,191



Expenditure

- Salaries (PO, SO): £30,189
- Contribution to Office expenses & Management Support: £3,053
- Publications: £4,892
- Website & IT: £3,126
- Events: £1,737
- Consultancy Costs: £7,840
- General Expenses: £1,313

Total: £52,150

Detailed financial information is available from the Project Manager
enquiries@lbp.org.uk

Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding

Signing the memorandum is to recognise the value of the Partnership's work, to obtain commitment to this work at a high level within each partner organisation and to acknowledge the need of having a solid partnership with dedicated staff. Signing the memorandum does not require any financial commitment and last year, five more organisations joined the ever-increasing list of organisations that support our work.

To become a signatory, contact the Project Officer at enquiries@lbp.org.uk

The current signatories include:

- Association of London Governments
- British Waterways Ltd
- BTCV
- CIP
- Countryside Agency
- Corporation of London
- English Nature
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Lee Valley Park Authority
- London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Havering, Islington, Merton, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth
- London First
- London Underground Ltd
- The Mayor of London
- London Natural History Society
- London Wildcare
- London Wildlife Trust
- Peabody Trust
- Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
- Royal Parks
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Royal Zoological Society
- Thames Estuary Partnership
- Thames Water Utilities Ltd
- Trees for Cities
- University College London
- Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
- Woodland Trust





Project Board

Greater London Authority (Chair), Association of London Government, BTCV, English Nature, London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum, London Underground Ltd, London Wildlife Trust, Royal Parks, RSPB, Peabody Trust, Thames Water, Environment Agency, London Natural History Society,

Management Working Group

London Wildlife Trust (Chair), Association of London Government, English Nature, Government Office for London, Greater London Authority, London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum, Thames Estuary Partnership.

Communications Working Group

English Nature (Chair), London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum, RSPB, Thames Estuary Partnership.

Habitat, Species and Data Working Group

Greater London Authority (Chair), British Waterways, Environment Agency, English Nature, London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum, London Natural History Society, London Wildlife Trust, Royal Parks, Thames Estuary Partnership, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust.

London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum

LB Islington (Chair, attends Management Working Group meetings), LB Bromley (Vice-Chair, attends Project Board meetings), LB Wandsworth (Vice Chair, attends GIGL meetings), LB Tower Hamlets (Vice-Chair, attends Communications Working Group meetings), LB Hounslow (Vice Chair, attends Habitat, Species and Data Working Group meetings). All London Boroughs are encouraged to take part in the forum's activities.

There are 2 'open places' at every Partnership meeting for anyone who wishes to attend, please contact the Chair of the relevant meeting. Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Partnership Staff

The London Biodiversity Officer is a key motivational force, essential to:

- Co-ordinate events involving the whole Partnership
- Provide a secretariat to Working Groups
- Build commitment from partners
- Carry out project development
- Provide enthusiasm and day to day leadership
- Manage volunteers

London Biodiversity Partnership

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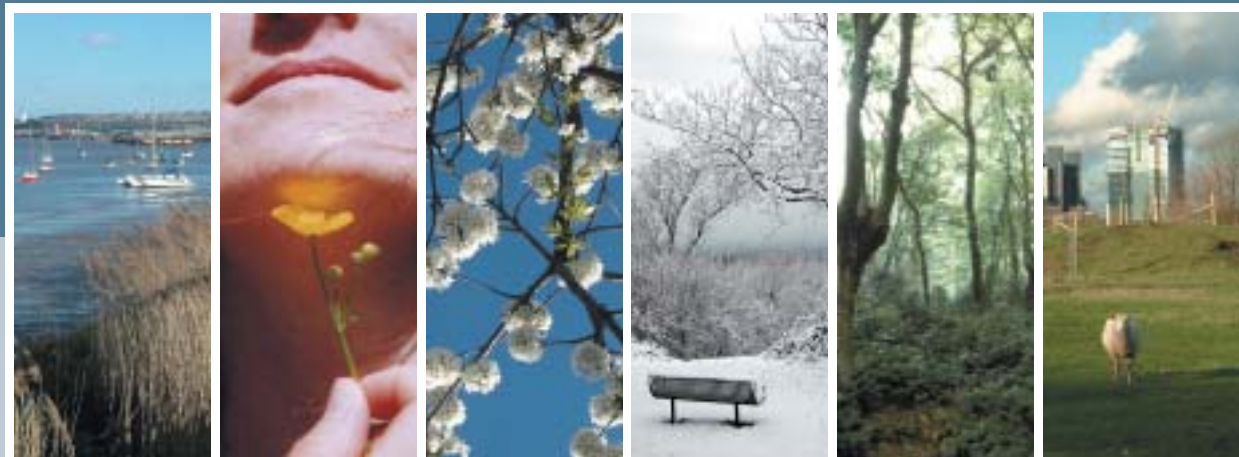
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