

SELSEY ACTION FOR WILDLIFE

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan For Selsey Parish

2005

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Why a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Parish?

Biodiversity, which can be defined as the variety of living things, is recognised as an important indicator of the health of our natural environment. We, along with all other species, ultimately depend on this environment for our survival. However, in less dramatic terms, a rich natural environment improves the quality of our day to day lives. Just looking out on trees from an office window, hearing skylarks up above or watching birds at the bird table can make us feel better, about ourselves and our lives. It perhaps reconnects us with our natural inheritance – a touchstone to our past.

Sustaining biodiversity and passing on to future generations an environment at least as rich as the one we inherited has been recognised internationally. National action plans for habitats and species have been produced and Sussex HAPs [Habitat Action Plans] and SAPs [Species Action Plans] are being developed. However it is very unlikely that the ambitious targets set out in these plans will be met without the support of local communities, especially where land is undesignated for its wildlife value. If local people don't value the biodiversity they have or fail to encourage this feeling in the young, the plans will remain paper visions.

This need for involving and enthusing local people is clearly recognised in Chichester District Council's LBAP [Local Biodiversity Action Plan], 'A Wealth of Wildlife'. The development of the Selsey Habitat Survey into a biodiversity action plan, with the view to using it as a pilot for other parishes, was one of the actions for wildlife highlighted in the original plan (2000).

This plan is needed in order to translate Sussex actions into parish actions, which involve local people and reflect their views, as well as help to preserve the essential character of Selsey Parish.

The Selsey Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership

Present partners and their roles.

Chichester District Council: provide grants, administrative support and information on land ownership, legal issues, planning and new developments.

Sussex Wildlife Trust: provide training, advice, help with interpreting survey information, support on the biodiversity action planning process and give presentations.

Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre: provide and process survey information and analysis of data.

Tree Wardens: co-ordinate tree surveys and tree planting schemes in the area.

Pond Wardens: co-ordinate pond surveys and provide advice on the development of wildlife ponds, their maintenance and enhancement.

Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve (WSCC) & Environment and Development Group [Coastal] WSCC : provide grants, practical support from Coastal Plan staff for talks, events and activities, access to equipment/tools/facilities at Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve, training, advice and information from staff on specific topics, specialist support and contacts for volunteers [Friends of Pagham Harbour] and publicity.

Selsey Parish Map Group: co-ordinate the plan and provide financial support.

Selsey Town Council: publicise action plan developments, help with financial support for specific projects and photocopying, provide facilities for meetings and act as a contact point.

Selsey Regeneration: Provide a web site facility, venue for meetings, office services – photocopying, laminating, up to date database on local community groups, display space, participation in events/exhibitions and opportunities for networking.

Representatives from these organisations will act as a steering group for the plan and meet twice yearly.

The roles of groups within the partnership will need further clarification as the plan develops and a clear mechanism for communication between them will need to be established.

Possible additional steering group partners: BTCV, FWAG.

Suggested Key partners to support the actions in the plan:

Major landowners	Chichester Records Office	Friends of Pagham Harbour
Local gamekeepers	Selsey Life	Sussex Ornithological Society
OUTSET	FOE local group	Women's Institutes
RSPB local group	Selsey Society	Nature Coast Project Officer
SWT Selsey group	Selsey Camera Club	Selsey Model Boat Club
Schools	Selsey Horticultural Society	Manhood Peninsula Partnership
Scouts/guides	Selsey Arts Society	J.A. Pye Ltd
Selsey Doorstep Green Action Group	Sussex Botanical Recording Society	ESPACE (European Spatial Planning Action for Climate Change) Manhood Peninsula Officer

AIMS

- To conserve, enhance and extend wildlife habitat through community involvement.
- To raise awareness of the value of biodiversity and foster enthusiasm for it.
- To develop local partnerships that ensure action for biodiversity is co-ordinated and sustainable.
- To translate actions identified in the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan into effective local actions which contribute to Sussex targets.
- To preserve and enhance local distinctiveness.
- To provide a basis for monitoring progress in biodiversity conservation in the parish.

ACTION PLAN

Scope of plan

All the habitats in the parish are considered for action apart from those which are found only within Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve, such as saltmarsh. The plan concentrates on areas which are not designated for wildlife protection, however actions relating to SSSIs and SNCIs are proposed where these lie outside the Nature Reserve.

The plan must be viewed as essentially developmental in that alterations will be made and new sections added as further Sussex habitat action plans and relevant species plans are published [see FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS], and as priorities change due to unforeseen events.

Description of Contents

Each habitat is considered using the following headings:

1. **Habitat Definition** - This is only given when needed.
2. **Current Status and Distribution**
3. **Importance** - A general explanation of its wildlife value is given.
4. **Local Significance** - Here the importance of the habitat for people, past and present, is explored alongside a description of how the habitat has changed over time [this section requires far greater research and a survey of present opinion – see AWARENESS and INVOLVEMENT – so must be considered as incomplete at present].
5. **Threats** - Emphasis is placed upon known local threats.
6. **Objectives**
7. **Actions** - Appendix I gives a list of all actions proposed. Those that are already completed or underway are indicated with an asterisk.
Specific targets for the parish have not been set but reference is made to the Sussex targets the actions contribute towards, where appropriate.
8. **Further Possibilities** - This section is included so that ideas are not forgotten.

COASTAL VEGETATED SHINGLE

Habitat Definition

Where plants grow on shingle, the shingle is termed vegetated. According to the Sussex HAP [p.2] the term vegetated shingle applies to all vegetated or potentially vegetated shingle.

Current Status and Distribution

The best stretches of habitat occur on the north-east side of the parish, within the SSSI but not all part of the nature reserve. Less rich areas can be found between the Bill and Hillfield Road, and bordering West Sands Caravan Park. A valuable section has been identified to the west of the coastguard tower but this is an area under particular threat from coastal erosion.

Importance

Vegetated shingle is important for the unusual and often highly specialised plants and animals it supports. It is a nationally rare habitat and of international conservation importance [Sussex HAP p.3] It is especially important for terrestrial invertebrates - some of the rarest and most specialised occur on sparsely vegetated shingle and are unique to the habitat [Sussex HAP p.5]

Local Significance

Change in the vegetated shingle habitat has not been well documented except at Pagham Harbour.

Threats

- Lack of understanding of the value of the habitat resulting in its deterioration through trampling, dog fouling, burning [barbecues], dumping, stripping of plants and the introduction of exotic species.
- Coastal protection work possibly interfering with natural processes – coastal squeeze
- Sea level rise
- Oil pollution

Objectives

1. Protect and monitor existing areas of vegetation outside the nature reserve.
2. Raise awareness of the importance of the vegetated shingle habitat.
3. Explore opportunities to extend the habitat.

Actions

Sussex HAP targets	Action proposed in Sussex HAP	Action proposed in Chichester District LBAP (2003)	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Liase with landowners adjoining or on shingle with a view to fostering appreciation of the shingle habitat.</p> <p>Monitor and take action where possible against invasive species.</p> <p>Provide interpretation at the most important shingle sites</p>	<p>Discourage dumping, burning and encroachment on shingle habitats by adjoining households.</p> <p>Promote local ‘guardians’ to monitor activities in their local shingle area.</p> <p>Promote education/interpretation about the value of the shingle habitat.</p> <p>Promote demonstration shingle habitats at appropriate locations.</p>	<p>The Council will continue to support ‘Nature Coast’ – a project focussed on protecting this type of habitat.</p> <p>Specific conservation schemes within the District will be assisted financially as well as by providing logistical support.</p> <p>As well as working with Nature Coast officers, residents and local conservation groups will be approached to help carry forward new projects.</p>	<p>Identify specific human threats to the habitat and help to publicise these through local media and displays.</p> <p>Encourage the development of shingle gardens with guidance from the Nature Coast Project Officer.</p> <p>Set up a group of local ‘guardians’ to monitor the habitat, outside the nature reserve, in terms of human activity and vegetation change, enlisting expert support to monitor populations of species, including invasive alien species.</p> <p>Help to promote use of the shingle education pack in schools.</p> <p>Explore possibility of developing a demonstration shingle area for interpretation and educational purposes.</p>

Further Possibilities:

1. Create a local shingle vegetation nursery.
2. Make use of wooden benches along sea front to raise awareness of the value of vegetated shingle – small plaques with a picture and information about a particular species.

HEDGEROWS

Current Status and Distribution

In the arable area to the west of the Chichester Road generally few hedgerows remain and those that do are in a poor state or are becoming defunct. The most extensive hedgerows, and some of the best, lie to the east of the road, especially in the Norton area. Here many appear to be species rich, although young elm trees are a major component which will in time be subject to Dutch Elm disease. In the urban area some remnants of old field boundaries survive. Overall, hedges suffer from a lack of appropriate management. Several new hedges have been planted, using native species, on arable land and along the northern boundary of the caravan site.

Importance of Species Rich Hedgerows

This is a critical habitat for many woodland and farmland species including several that are rare or in decline. In intensively farmed land they are a key habitat because they provide corridors between other features [Sussex HAP p.2].

Local Significance

17th and 18th century maps [1672 Survey, Yeakell & Gardner's map 1778] show a patchwork of small fields to the north and east of the parish, many probably divided by hedgerows. Much of the southern part was divided into large common fields. In the 1820s these common fields were enclosed and some remnants of these straight, hawthorn enclosure hedges survive – most noticeably in the Northcommon Farm area. In the 20th century intensive agriculture saw the removal of many hedges to the north of the village and the gradual loss of hedges in the urban area as the village rapidly expanded. Since the parish is so lacking in woodland the hedgerows are particularly important as refuges for wildlife.

Threats

- Dutch Elm disease
- Lack of appropriate management
- Development and 'tidying up'

Objectives

1. Identify all ancient and/or species rich hedges.
2. Improve the quality of existing species rich hedges through the introduction of favourable management techniques.
3. Encourage the restoration of defunct or partly defunct hedges.
4. Encourage the planting of new mixed hedges using local native species.
5. Encourage the planting of hedgerow trees.
6. Raise awareness of the importance of species rich/ancient hedges.
7. Raise awareness of the importance of garden hedges for wildlife.

ACTIONS

Sussex HAP targets	Action proposed in Sussex HAP	Action proposed in Chichester District LBAP	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Halt the net loss of hedgerows by the year 2000, and loss of hedgerows which are both ancient and species rich by 2005.</p> <p>Achieve the favourable management of 25% of species rich and ancient hedges by the year 2000.</p> <p>Aim for the favourable management of 50% of species rich and ancient hedges by the year 2005.</p>	<p>Identify the extent of ancient and/or species rich hedges.</p> <p>Collate information on hedges of particular historical and conservation value for targeting of grants and advice.</p> <p>Highlight importance of species rich hedges in advice given to landowners.</p> <p>Organise events to show good practice and restoration techniques, especially coppicing.</p>	<p>Policy BE7 of the Local Plan states that the District Planning Authority will require proposals affecting hedges to include measures to protect existing hedges and may impose conditions on any permission to ensure adequate protection.</p> <p>Support local groups to map hedgerows.</p>	<p>Identify all ancient and/or species rich hedges.</p> <p>Research, collate and make available information on hedges of particular historical and conservation value.</p> <p>Involve local community in hedgerow management through the provision of training courses.</p> <p>Highlight hedgerow initiatives by landowners [Bunn Leisure, Home Farm] in local press and displays.</p>

Further Possibilities

1. Support Home Farm Management Plan through contact with FWAG.
2. Raise awareness of the importance of garden hedges by supporting wildlife gardening initiatives [see URBAN AREA].
3. Research the demise of Elm trees. Do we leave things as they are or replace Elms with other species of native trees and shrubs?
SWT does not favour the replacement of dead elms with Dutch Elm disease resistant non-native / hybrid elms.

REEDBEDS AND SALINE LAGOONS

Habitat Definition for Saline Lagoons

‘Saline lagoons are essentially bodies of saline [salty] water that are partially separated from the adjacent sea’

Current Status and Distribution

The Severals are saline lagoons, which are surrounded by the only significant reedbeds outside of the nature reserve. There is an urgent need for better management of these habitats as the lagoons are drying out and scrub is encroaching. They are within the SSSI but outside of the nature reserve.

Importance

Both are rare habitats in the UK. Saline lagoons are of international importance. ‘Reedbeds are amongst the most important habitats for birds in the UK’. [Sussex Reedbeds HAP p. 3] They are also important for invertebrates with some of our rarest species depending on them.

Saline lagoons are also important for invertebrates and birds, especially waders, wildfowl and seabirds which use them as feeding and roosting sites. [Sussex Saline Lagoons HAP p.3]

Local Significance

Field names [1672 and 1778] indicate that in the 17th and 18th centuries the land along the western boundary of the parish was very marshy, hence there may have been more areas of reedbed here at this time prior to extensive drainage schemes.

The Severals are an historic feature and valued by local birdwatchers.

Threats

- The lagoons are being overtaken by natural succession: spread of reeds and encroaching scrub.
- Drying out
- Pollution by agricultural run-off
- Sea level rise
- Lack of appropriate management
- Coastal squeeze
- It should be noted that there may be conflict between the actions that are best for reedbeds and those that are best for saline lagoons.

Objectives

1. Encourage and assist in reedbed management.
2. Encourage the planting of new areas of reed, where appropriate.

ACTIONS

Action proposed in Sussex HAPS	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Identify reedbed creation opportunities for wastewater/pollution treatment.</p> <p>[Reedbeds HAP]</p> <p>Investigate novel markets for reed products and means of enlarging existing markets.</p> <p>[Reedbeds HAP]</p>	<p>Involve the community in the planting and management of new sections of reedbed in East Beach pond.</p> <p>Explore possible local uses for reed.</p>
<p>Encourage active involvement by local groups in managing lagoon sites.</p> <p>[Saline Lagoons HAP]</p>	<p>Promote active local involvement in the practical management of the Severals in collaboration with Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve, English Nature and the landowner.</p>
<p>Practical restoration of northern reedbeds during winter 2005/06, funded by English Nature.</p>	<p>Possible opportunities for volunteers to get involved in practical habitat management or wildlife monitoring tasks.</p>

TREES, WOODLAND AND SCRUB

Habitat Definition

This section includes all trees growing in the parish [excluding those growing in gardens] and areas of scrub.

Current Status and Distribution

The only significant area of woodland is found at Church Norton, mostly within the nature reserve. This is ancient woodland, as is the strip of woodland that runs along the back of houses south of the Severals. New planting of native species has taken place mainly around the ponds in the arable area and along the northern boundary of the caravan site, as well as in parks in the town. There is generally very little tree cover in the town. Few areas of scrub exist, the most notable being around the Severals and within the reserve. However small patches can still be found within the urban area.

Importance

Ancient woodland is of particularly high conservation value because of the diverse flora and fauna it supports, including many rare species. There is also growing evidence of the benefits of trees to people, such as the following:

- in an urban environment trees can save up to 10% of energy consumption through their moderation of the local climate;
- they stabilise soil, preventing erosion and reducing the effects of flooding;
- reduce air pollution;
- have a positive impact on mental well-being, the incidence of asthma and skin cancer.

[Sussex HAP p.13]
People like trees!

Local Significance

Maps [1672 and 1778] show that much of the land was in agricultural use by the 17th century. Probably most of the woodland was cleared long before this time because of the highly productive and easily cultivated soils. The significant areas of woodland that survive today are the same as those that survived into the 17th century, all be it reduced in size. Aerial surveys since 1971[WSCC] show a slight reduction in woodland, mainly due to the deterioration of the strip south of the Severals, known locally as ‘Adder Wood’. However this does not take account of the many mature trees that have been lost, especially along roadsides, through Dutch Elm disease and also through development. Old photographs show a village with far greater tree cover.

The aerial surveys show no net loss of scrub, mainly due to increases around the Severals but this does not reflect the loss of small areas due to development.

Threats

- Lack of management/care of urban trees
- Lack of traditional management of ancient woodland reducing biodiversity
- To scrub include: new developments, tidying up, dumping and planting of alien non-native species

Objectives

1. Explore all possibilities for tree planting and substantially increase the numbers planted.
2. Gather survey information for all urban trees, important areas of woodland and scrub.
3. Retain and enhance all important areas of woodland and scrub.
4. Support the traditional management of the ancient woodland within Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve.
5. Research the history of the remaining ancient woodland and raise awareness of its importance.
6. Establish potential sites for the planting of Black Poplar, either as individual specimen trees or as small riverine/linear woodlands.

ACTIONS

Sussex HAP targets	Action proposed in Sussex Woodlands HAP	Objective and action proposed in Chi. Dist. LBAP	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Maintain the existing area of ancient semi-natural woodland.</p> <p>Achieve favourable conservation status in over 70% of designated sites and 50% of the total woodland resource by 2010.</p> <p>Such measures to include: 25% of previously coppiced woods brought back into coppice management.</p>	<p>Carry out planting at new sites, of wild trees and blocks, where appropriate.</p> <p>Support research on the past management of woodland.</p> <p>Encourage local use of woodland produce through support for community woodlands.</p> <p>Create links with Sussex Tree wardens and other initiatives. Work with them to achieve long term monitoring of both mature and young trees. [Black Poplar from species Action Plan for Sussex].</p>	<p>To support and encourage the planting and aftercare of native tree species in appropriate places.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Objective]</p> <p>Support and promote existing campaigns like the Black Poplar Planting Campaign [PHLNR] and Seed Gathering Sunday to encourage planting of trees from seeds.</p> <p>Support and encourage tree wardens.</p> <p>Promote caring for existing trees.</p> <p>Encourage and support community groups to plant native species to enhance biodiversity and establish a commitment to the aftercare of trees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage schools, other groups and individuals to gather local tree seeds, plant and care for them. • Set up a parish tree nursery. • Survey all street trees. • Set up an ‘adopt a tree’ scheme. • Develop a ‘Tree Trail’. • Support tree planting and aftercare on Home Farm. • Explore the possibility of reviving the Selsey Trees Initiative [WSCC]. • Identify ownership of all important areas of woodland and scrub. • Conduct surveys where necessary. • Encourage and assist in the development of site management plans for important sites. • Support coppicing by local volunteers in the ancient woodland within the nature reserve. • Research the history of remaining areas of ancient woodland, especially their management, use and wildlife interest – publicise this through displays, local press and a booklet. • Explore the possibility of local people managing the willow on Home Farm and at Crablands Farm Meadow, using it for craft, art and garden purposes. • Crablands Farm Meadow – opportunities for volunteer tasks – coppicing of willow. • Identify favourable sites for planting of Natural Black Poplar. Plant new trees and set up system for monitoring them in the long term.

Further Possibilities

1. Create a community orchard.

ROAD VERGES

Definition of Habitat

The Draft Sussex HAP defines the verge as the area of land over which the Highway Authority has responsibility for maintenance – a mix of habitats, comprising scrub, grass, herbs, wildflowers and bare ground, located between the road and the adjacent boundary [Draft Sussex HAP Feb. 2001]. This definition will apply here.

Current Status and Distribution

Road verges have not been surveyed in any detail so an assessment of their biological characteristics has yet to be made.

Importance

Road verges may form important local refuges for wildlife and have the potential to act as important corridors between habitats.

Local Significance

Consultation for the Chichester District Council LBAP identified that local people valued road verges for their appearance and wildlife.

Threats

- Inappropriate management e.g. cutting regime
- Inappropriate landscaping e.g. planting of daffodils and other garden flowers
- Erosion of verge by car parking
- Disturbance through laying services and consequent re-seeding with rye grass can reduce biodiversity
- Litter

Objectives

1. Identify road verges where enhancement would be worthwhile and appropriate.
2. Negotiate suitable management for a number of the sites as identified in **1.** and monitor these sites.
3. Raise awareness of the value of the road verge habitat for wildlife.
4. Encourage the development of new verges as natural verges.

ACTIONS

Potential of Road Verges as described in Draft Sussex HAP	Objective and action proposed in Chi. Dist. LBAP	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>The potential for community involvement is high. Subject to strict safety requirements, it would be possible to involve local communities in both recording and auditing their local road verges for habitat and associated species and also adopting them for monitoring.</p> <p>Interpretation and informal environmental education could be increased through greater publicity of the value and significance of the wildlife associated with road verge habitat and in particular through the involvement of communities, through initiatives such as promoted via Local District BAPs.</p>	<p>To highlight the growing importance of road verges as wildlife habitats. [Objective]</p> <p>Encourage local surveys of botanical species in verges by volunteers from the community.</p>	<p>Survey appropriate road verges based on the model developed in the ‘Road Verges for Wildlife Project’ in Chichester District.</p> <p>Explore the possibility of managing certain road verges for biodiversity within the urban area. [creation of meadow areas]</p> <p>Negotiate the development of demonstration areas of natural verge on the new Pye Field development and monitor these.</p> <p>Use demonstration areas to raise awareness of the value of the road verge habitat.</p>

GRASSLAND

Habitat Definition

Unimproved grassland is a product of traditional land management by our ancestors over many years. It supports particular grasses and wildflowers which define it. Semi-improved grasslands are those which have been ploughed and/or had fertilisers added in the past, significantly reducing species diversity. Agriculturally improved grasslands may only contain a very few common wildflowers [Sussex Neutral and Acid Grasslands HAP p.2]. Amenity grassland is included in the URBAN section.

Current Status and Distribution

Most of the grassland has been improved to a greater or lesser extent. Only Crablands Farm Meadow, designated as an SSSI for its botanical importance, remains largely unimproved. However some areas of semi-improved grassland have been identified and are worthy of further investigation. Several fields along the southern edge of the nature reserve have been put into set-aside, enhancing their biodiversity.

Importance

‘Unimproved neutral grasslands are extremely rich wildlife habitats’ [Sussex HAP p.4]. They contain numerous wildflowers and grasses which in turn support many invertebrates. These and small mammals provide food for larger predators such as stoats, weasels, bats and barn owls. ‘The conservation of the last remaining unimproved resource remains of the highest priority for action since by definition unimproved grasslands are ancient and unrecrutable’ [Sussex HAP p. 13]. Present habitat scarcity and local site variation mean that here in Sussex many of the remaining sites have unique plant assemblages with important local characteristics. Even small sites are important as refuges for previously common but now threatened species’ [Sussex HAP p. 5]. Semi-improved grasslands may still retain valuable wildflower and grass species which make them of high conservation value.

Local Significance

Field names [1672, 1778 and 1849 Tithe map] suggest that there was once an extensive area of grazing marsh right along the western boundary of the parish from the sea to the Ferry. Aerial surveys [WSSC] show a dramatic loss in unimproved grassland, from 117 hectares in 1971 to 2 hectares in 1991.

Threats

- SSSI: isolation, new developments bordering the site, trampling, lack of traditional management e.g. grazing
- New housing developments
- Lack of appreciation of wildlife value

Objectives

1. Identify all remaining areas of semi-improved grassland and assess their wildlife value.
2. Help to prevent the loss or decline in quality of unimproved and semi-improved grassland sites.
3. Encourage enhancement of semi-improved grassland.
4. Encourage and assist in the creation of meadow areas on suitable sites – see URBAN and ROAD VERGES.
5. Raise awareness of the value of grassland sites.

ACTIONS

Sussex HAP targets	Objective and action proposed in Sussex Neutral and Acid Grassland HAP	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>All remaining important sites to be documented and monitored.</p> <p>Secure appropriate long-term management of known existing habitat resource.</p> <p>Prevent further decline through loss, neglect or damage.</p>	<p>Raise the profile of unimproved grasslands amongst residents and visitors, and the involvement of local owners and residents in their protection where appropriate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[objective]</p> <p>Identify and record all unimproved and semi-improved grassland sites and their quality.</p>	<p>In partnership with the landowner and WSCC, explore ways in which the community can assist in the management and monitoring of Crablands Farm Meadow, and raise awareness of the value of this site.</p> <p>Ensure that all areas of semi-improved grassland are surveyed using local and county expertise.</p> <p>Research the history of important grassland sites.</p> <p>Attempt to relocate and accurately map rare plant species in the Parish [see also ALL OTHER HABITATS].</p>

Further Possibilities

Create a parish wildflower/ grass seed bank.

RIFES AND DITCHES

Current Status and Distribution

There is an extensive network of rifes and ditches, mainly for drainage purposes. These have not been surveyed in detail for their overall wildlife value.

Importance

Ditches and rifes have the potential to support a wide range of plant, bird and invertebrate species. They can also support a number of fish species including eels, important prey for grey heron. Sticklebacks are important for kingfishers and grass snakes. Ditches can be important spawning areas for fish as they provide still water so eggs and fry don't get washed away [Sussex Floodplain Grassland HAP p.5]. Most importantly this habitat provides a potential local stronghold for the endangered water vole.

Local Significance

A recent survey has identified that this habitat supports water voles. So there is the opportunity to highlight the value of action for biodiversity in relation to this fondly regarded creature.

Threats

- Pollution by agricultural run-off
- Over management of vegetation growing on banks and alongside banks
- Lack of buffer strips/grass margins
- Silting up
- Over deepening or dredging
- Fluctuating water levels and drying out

Objectives

1. Monitor water vole distribution and populations.
2. Support the enhancement of ditches and rifes.
3. Assist in monitoring the effects of enhancement work.

ACTIONS

Action proposed in Sussex HAPS/SAPS	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Floodplain Grassland HAP</p> <p>Monitor any enhancement or re-creation projects to assess their success.</p> <p>Water Vole SAP</p> <p>Monitor the effectiveness of water vole mitigation techniques.</p> <p>Ensure that the status and distribution of water voles in Sussex is monitored through regular surveys to determine the level of fragmentations and the effectiveness of conservation measures.</p> <p>Publicise surveys and local involvement in water vole conservation to stimulate further public and business sector interest.</p>	<p>Support Home Farm management plan [FWAG] by raising the awareness of the work being done on the farm in respect of these habitats.</p> <p>Monitor the effects of rife and ditch enhancement projects.</p> <p>Monitor water vole distribution (also relevant to PONDS) and populations as part of the project co-ordinated by Paghams Harbour Nature Reserve and Rob Strachan [WildCRU – University of Oxford].</p> <p>Publicise local action for water voles.</p> <p>Engage more volunteers in water vole monitoring surveys.</p>

URBAN AREA

Habitat Definition

This includes parks, the golf course, churchyards, other areas of amenity grassland, the caravan site and gardens. Road verges, street trees, hedgerows and areas of scrub and woodland have been dealt with in other sections.

Current Status and Distribution

There is more amenity grassland than any other type of grassland. Some of this has considerable potential for wildlife, especially the golf course, St. Peter's and St. Wilfrid's Chapel churchyard and the public parks.

Importance

The urban area is the second largest after arable and as such serves as an essential refuge for wildlife in the parish. 'Parks and private gardens are the main day to day contact points with wildlife for most of the population. Given the right conditions, wildlife can thrive in towns. This can help to raise awareness for the natural world and a concern for its conservation.' [UK Biodiversity Action Plan, 1994] The area of gardens nationally is believed to be far greater than all nature reserves combined. [Sussex HAP p.6]

Local Significance

The urban area has expanded rapidly, particularly in the last fifty years, often with little regard for the natural environment. Older residents often reflect on the loss of fields, hedgerows and trees as the village has become a town.

Threats

- Flooding
- Over management/tidying
- A lack of interest in biodiversity and understanding of the value of it

Objectives

1. Negotiate site management plans for significant areas of public open space.
2. Develop 'Pocket Parks' on appropriate areas of amenity grassland.
3. Encourage and support the management of caravan sites, churchyards, the golf course and school grounds for the greater benefit of wildlife.
4. Encourage gardening for wildlife and raise awareness of its value.
5. Encourage residents to contribute to local/national wildlife surveys and to keep records of their observations of wildlife generally.
6. Ensure that planning guidelines in relation to wildlife [see Chi. Dist. LBAP p.4] are followed and opportunities for habitat creation or enhancement are fully explored.

ACTIONS [see also AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT]

Urban Areas of Sussex BAP targets	Action proposed in Sussex BAP	Action proposed in Chichester District LBAP (2003)	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Identify sites and species of local importance in urban areas, ensure protection and implement appropriate management by 2005 and review regularly.</p> <p>Implement Habitat and Species Action Plans in urban areas by 2010.</p> <p>Identify, maintain and develop the wildlife corridors linking habitats and greenspaces in urban areas by 2005 and review regularly. [applies also to HEDGEROWS and ROAD VERGES]</p> <p>Double the number of people directly involved in working to maintain and enhance biodiversity as individuals or through community groups by 2005.</p> <p>Create new urban greenspace and increase the amount of land managed primarily for biodiversity in urban areas by 10% by 2010.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local Authorities to write and implement site management plans and maintenance contracts that incorporate actions to maximise the biodiversity potential on at least their land holdings. • Implement the relevant Habitat and Species Action Plans for urban areas in Sussex. • All organisations to develop policies and programmes that encourage individuals to become involved in biodiversity through: gardening for wildlife at home; projects in schools; projects in the work place; involvement in local greenspace projects; participation in community projects. • Establish effective partnerships within each local authority area that bring together public, private and community sectors to promote, develop and implement urban biodiversity • Address public safety issues in design and management plans for parks and open spaces. • Provide good quality advice on biodiversity to local residents, community groups, landowners and land managers. • Provide advice on site safeguard and management to implement biodiversity targets and actions in urban areas. 	<p>To promote wildlife conservation in private gardens and schools as part of its Biodiversity Awareness Raising Campaign.</p> <p>Promote sustainable long-term management practices/plans for churchyards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop site management plans for East Beach pond area, Oval Field, Hillfield Park and Selsey Rec. Ground with relevant organisations and individuals. • Identify ownership of smaller areas of amenity grassland - develop habitat enhancement schemes [pocket parks] where appropriate[see GRASS -LANDS & ROAD VERGES]. • Collate survey info. relating to the caravan site, carry out further surveys where necessary, highlight value to owners and negotiate enhancement projects. • Conduct a detailed habitat survey of golf course [Phase 1+], highlight wildlife value, negotiate enhancement initiatives. • Conduct Phase 2 surveys of St. Peter's and St. Wilfrid's Chapel churchyard, highlight wildlife value, negotiate site management plans. • Support all site management plans with advice and practical action, where appropriate.

<p>All householders to enhance the biodiversity of their own gardens.</p> <p>All people to have access to advice, information and training on biodiversity in urban areas by 2005 and to review the provision on a regular basis every 5 years.</p> <p>All urban areas to have access to sufficient biodiversity information to measure progress towards Sussex Urban BAP targets and actions by 2010.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a Gardening for Wildlife scheme to increase the biodiversity value of gardens, including greenspaces, parks and allotments. • Promote a gardening for wildlife project. • Increase by 10% annually the number of school grounds which have a biodiversity project to improve school grounds. • Increase the use of swift and other bird nest-boxes for public and private buildings especially in new development sites. • Promote information about local projects through the media. <p>Pipistrelle bat species Act Plan for Sussex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure developments, provide for pipistrelle roost sites sufficient for local populations. • Survey areas containing major proposed developments (725 houses) and monitor areas following development to assess result of pipistrelle roost provision. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the SWT Gardening for Wildlife initiatives. • Gather records of current swift nesting areas and those of the recent past. • Encourage the use of swift boxes in the Pye development. • Support school grounds projects in terms of advice, sources of funding and practical action by local volunteers. • Encourage local people to keep nature diaries through competitions, displays of examples etc. • Encourage local people to take part in surveys by: highlighting these in the local press, displaying local results of surveys, personal contact with schools and other organisations and making them a part of themed weeks e.g. National Tree Week, BTO Garden Bird Survey and Stag Beetle surveys. • Regularly highlight local wildlife projects in the local media [see AWARENESS • Gather local bat records and carry out surveys in relation to sites and as a part of national surveys. • Encourage provision of pipistrelle roost sites in new developments and monitor areas to assess this provision.
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PONDS

Current Status and Distribution

Several old large ponds remain and some of these have been enhanced in recent times. The number and distribution of garden wildlife ponds has yet to be investigated.

Importance

Good ponds teem with life – they are mini nature reserves in their own right. They represent a crucial habitat for frogs, toads and newts and are important for many insects, including dragonflies and damselflies. They can also support a diversity of aquatic plants and populations of water vole and water shrew. Other animals and a variety of birds are attracted to their fresh water and the life it supports. Moreover, ponds provide a vital close contact with the wonders of nature, especially for the young. Hence they have a potentially very important role to play in increasing understanding of, and enthusiasm for biodiversity.

Local Significance

Maps [OS 1932 and 1998] show that several important large ponds have been lost in the last 70 years, notably Crablands Pond and several within the area of the present caravan site. Many smaller farm ponds could also have disappeared. However the increase in garden ponds may well have offset this loss in the overall resource. These therefore now have an essential role to play as refuges for pond wildlife.

Threats

- Drying out [global warming]
- Lack of management
- Invasive alien species such as terrapin and bullfrog [East Beach Pond] and exotic plants [Parrots Feather, New Zealand Stonecrop etc.]

Objectives

1. Compile an inventory of all ponds [including garden ponds].
2. Encourage and support the recording of pond life.
3. Encourage and support wildlife pond creation.
4. Encourage and support the management of existing ponds for the benefit of wildlife.

ACTIONS

Sussex Standing Fresh Water HAP targets	Action proposed in Sussex Standing Fresh Water HAP	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Characterise the Sussex standing fresh water resource in terms of distribution, extent, biodiversity value by 2005.</p> <p>Monitor, control and where possible eradicate invasive alien species.</p> <p>Maintain the current range, extent and value of standing fresh waters in Sussex.</p>	<p>Promote the pond inventory and the collection of relevant information through a standardised survey form.</p> <p>Publicise surveys and local involvement to stimulate interest in ponds.</p> <p>Promote public understanding of the importance of standing fresh water habitats.</p> <p>Monitor the spread of invasive alien species.</p> <p>Target garden pond owners for conservation advice.</p> <p>Ensure that advice leaflets on pond creation and management are widely available to the public.</p>	<p>Map all existing ponds, including garden ponds.</p> <p>Collect basic survey information about all ponds outside gardens for a parish ponds database.</p> <p>Encourage residents to collect basic survey information about their own ponds to include in the parish database.</p> <p>Encourage local organisations, groups and individuals to keep records of the wildlife in and around ponds including the identification of alien species.</p> <p>Enhance the wildlife value of East Beach Pond in association with the Pye field development. Co-ordinate a long-term site management plan.</p> <p>Support the SWT Gardening for Wildlife initiatives in respect of the creation and management of wildlife ponds [see URBAN]</p> <p>Crablands Farm Meadow – opportunities for volunteer tasks – pond restoration.</p> <p>Restore the old pond at Crablands Farm Meadow.</p>

ARABLE LAND

Habitat definition

This section includes all regularly cultivated land and field margins.

Current Status and Distribution

Arable land occupies a greater area than any other single habitat in the parish. It is divided between Greenlease Farm and Home Farm, both to the north of the urban area.

Home Farm specialises in salad crops. Winter wheat is grown as a break crop and there are small areas of linseed, which is biennial. The farm has followed a comprehensive Biodiversity and Water Habitat Management Plan (whole Farm Plan) as part of a project between Sussex FWAG and Wildcru – University of Oxford [see, TREES, WOODLAND AND SCRUB, HEDGEROWS, GRASSLAND, RIFES AND DITECHES]. Many grass margins are now being sown. The Game Conservancy Council is now providing management advice.

On Greenlease Farm the land is not intensively farmed so its naturalness is retained.

Importance

‘An important number of rare and declining plant and animals species depend on arable habitats for their survival This value may be in the cropped area itself of the features contained around or within the crop including: beetle banks, conservation, headlands and grass and wildflower margins.’[Sussex Arable HAP p.6]

Local Significance

As the largest single habitat, arable land has considerable importance in terms of the parish’s overall biodiversity. Much of this land has been farmed for centuries. However, it is the intensification and change in farming practice over the last fifty years that has resulted in its decreased wildlife value. Fortunately, as mentioned above, some areas have remained less affected, and in others habitat enhancement is being integrated with commercial farm practices.

Barn owl, skylark, lapwing, corn bunting, grey partridge and water vole are key declining species that the farmland supports and upon which the management of the arable habitat has a direct impact.

Threats

Objectives

1. Raise awareness of the importance of arable land for wildlife.
2. Establish accurate baseline data for species supported by the habitat – plants and animals.
3. Implement a system for monitoring the effects of conservation work, on wildlife, linking with RSPB & BTO National Survey Programmes.

ACTIONS

Action proposed in Sussex HAP	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Encourage a wider recognition of the importance of arable sites amongst farmers and the public at large.</p> <p>Establish accurate baseline data informing the conditions of wildlife on or affected by Sussex arable fields.</p> <p>Identify the current arable hotspots to target for management.</p> <p>Identify key arable land species and establish their status.</p> <p>Identify and monitor current populations and key sites for barn owl, brown hare, skylark and corn bunting.</p> <p>Implement arable land monitoring system.</p>	<p>Help to publicise the value of arable land for wildlife and projects aimed to increase its value.</p> <p>Carry out a variety of surveys with support from appropriate experts (Pagham Harbour & S.O.S volunteers and the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre) e.g. Birds – Breeding Bird survey and Farmland Winter Bird survey, Mammal (see RIFES & DITCHES) insect, amphibian (see PONDS), reptiles and wildflowers (see GRASSLANDS).</p> <p>Help to monitor populations of barn owl, skylark, corn bunting, grey partridge and song thrush.</p> <p>Help to monitor the effect of habitat enhancement schemes, such as the planting of grass margins, on specific species.</p>

AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT

People need to reconnect with wildlife.

The objectives set out below underpin all others in the plan. The involvement, understanding and enthusiasm of local people is essential for the plan to be become reality and for it to be sustainable in the long term. ‘The importance of involving and enthusing local people’ [p.2] is an underlying principle of the Chichester District Council LBAP and ‘People and Wildlife’- BAP for the Urban Areas of Sussex :

‘Creating the opportunities for local people to have contact with nature at first hand is vital in building interest, support and understanding of biodiversity. It is the interest of people in preserving their local wildlife that can bring about changes in policy and local development priorities.’ [p.9]

The future of our wildlife depends upon it.

Many of the actions proposed for Selsey Parish are relevant to many or all habitats and support the continuing development of the plan as a whole.

Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan Objective

To raise awareness of the value of biodiversity and involve local people in action for wildlife.

Chichester District Council LBAP Objective (2003)

To raise the level of awareness about wildlife issues and to implement educational initiatives for school children and the public.

Selsey Parish LBAP Objective

To raise awareness of the value of biodiversity and involve local people in action for wildlife.

ACTIONS

Action proposed in Sussex BAP for Urban Areas	Action proposed in Chichester District LBAP	Action proposed in Selsey Parish
<p>Establish a network of local satellite recording stations under the umbrella of the Biodiversity records centre to: encourage the recording of urban biodiversity; provide opportunities for local people to be involved in wildlife recording schemes which contribute to local BAPS and the assessment of their progress; monitor populations of key species/indicators characteristic of local urban areas.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity principles and targets.</p> <p>Provide resources to promote biodiversity in the urban environment.</p> <p>Increase the amount of training and support to community initiatives managing local greenspace sites.</p>	<p>Raise awareness of wildlife issues and specific projects and forthcoming events by circulating leaflets, and by including articles in the Council's 'initiatives' magazine and other corporate publications and newsletters.</p> <p>Work with other bodies to organise events such as Marine Week and Apple Day.</p> <p>Continue talks for schools and other organisations to promote not only the Council's role in conservation, but also the broader underlying issues.</p> <p>Utilise Brandy Hole Copse Local Nature Reserve, and the impending 'Urban Habitat Action Plan' as a means of bringing conservation to the community, and making the densely populated areas of the district friendlier to wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a database of past and present wildlife records. • Collect and display local wildlife records for the parish, in the form of photos, notes, diaries, sketches etc. • Set up an archive of originals or copies of these records. • Encourage a photo survey of habitats. • Make a collection of historical photos that illustrate habitat change. • Set up a local action group/network of conservation volunteers – parish wildlife wardens. • Support work at Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve, as appropriate. • Promote the development of nature trails and the provision of guided walks - highlight and enhance the wildlife value of local footpaths and promote their historical significance. • Produce a leaflet for the local community which describes this plan in simple terms. • Regularly update the community on progress with the plan through the local press, displays and other methods of communication that are devised. • Gather parishioners' opinions about the local habitats and species they value. • Research habitat change and the significance of habitats and species for local people through history. • Set up an art competition for all sections of the community inviting individuals to capture their favourite wildlife in the parish, using any media. • Co-ordinate training needs for groups and individuals involved in actions proposed for Selsey Parish. • Develop materials for interpreting wildlife sites and educational resources linked to sites, habitats and projects.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The following Sussex HAPS and SAPS are under review:-

- Marine
- Swift

The wide-ranging effects of climate change will need to be considered whenever this plan is reviewed (support from ESPACE project).

Review date: January 2007