



ASHDOWN FOREST VOLUNTEERS NEWSLETTER

Dear Volunteers.....

Issue 4, Jan 2009

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X Scallywag 

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Winter work on Ashdown Forest

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There has been a notable increase in the number of Commoners claiming their estovers this year and in non-Commoners purchasing firewood. This is probably in response to the increased cost of domestic fuel - apparently sales of wood-burning stoves have increased by 40%. This useful workforce gives us the opportunity to begin managing our woodlands in line with the objectives set in the new woodland management plan, completed in 2008. One of the objectives is to create the space for oak and beech trees to develop large crowns by reducing over-crowding by young trees. So-called 'open grown' trees tend to be larger, longer-lived and more stable than trees forced to compete in dense stands. Once it has been adopted by the Board, the woodland management plan will be available on the website.

Unsurprisingly, the wet summer was a poor one for butterflies, with numbers of every species lower than usual. On the other hand, it was apparently a bumper year for cotton grass and over 120 sites were identified. A previously unknown clump of royal fern was discovered in Wrens Warren - it is nice to know that there are still new things to be discovered on the Forest, especially as this fern is 6 foot tall and nearly as wide!

Chris Marrable

The Ashdown Forest Bird Group



It's been a great year for big birds - ravens have been seen regularly, at least three pairs of buzzards have reared young, and red kites have appeared several times.

Spring brought good numbers of chiffchaffs, willow warblers, whitethroats and blackcaps, and a wood warbler - one of our rarest visitors - remained in the Broadstone area for some days. Other migrants included turtle doves, cuckoos, garden warblers and good numbers of redstarts, though sightings of spotted flycatcher and tree pipit were down on the preceding year.

Heathland species such as woodlarks, skylarks and yellowhammers, continued to flourish, whilst stonechat numbers may have declined. Dartford warblers had a very successful year, and are now often seen. Nightjars and woodcocks were displaying over many areas of the Forest in summer, and the occasional barn owl was seen hunting.

It's worth looking for crossbills now - there is a roving flock of these colourful birds. A shower of pine cone debris as they feed may alert you to their presence!

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Conservation Group

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See you soon, Hew



Natura 2000 - Europe's nature for you.

You may be asking what is the new logo that has appeared on the home page? Natura 2000 is an ecological network of protected areas in the territory of the European Union. In May 1992, governments of the European Union adopted legislation designed to protect the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. This legislation is called the Habitats Directive and complements the Birds Directive adopted in 1979. These two Directives are the basis of the creation of the Natura 2000 network.

The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Together, SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 network of protected areas.

The Natura 2000 network contributes to the "Emerald network" of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs) set up under the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats.

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