

# Habitat Action Plan for Sussex

## : Biodiversity Action Plan for the Urban Areas of Sussex

One of the most urgent environmental problems we are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is the loss of global biodiversity. As 90% of the population live in cities, towns and villages, it is here that this loss will have the most impact on our quality of life. The increasing density and the intensity of urban living has a major impact on the environment and our use of natural resources. Although we are part of the problem, we are also part of the solution. *People and Wildlife: Biodiversity Action Plan for the Urban Areas of Sussex* sets out the action necessary to maintain and enhance the variety of life all around us.

The underlying principle of *People and Wildlife* (Sussex Urban BAP) is that a healthy environment is an essential requirement for both our quality of life and for wildlife. We can achieve this through changing our attitudes and actions towards the natural environment within our everyday lives by:

- Encouraging everyone to make environmentally informed decisions as our actions can and do affect the environment;
- Looking at actions we can take as individuals or as members of a community based group, part of a school or college, employer or employee of a business or as decision-makers who help shape local policies;
- Recognising that biodiversity is an essential indicator of the health of the environment and hence our quality of life.

The Government has made clear the links between biodiversity, quality of life and sustainable development. These broad environmental themes are being addressed at both a national and local level through Community Plans, Sustainable Development Strategies and Local Agenda 21 initiatives. The Sussex Urban BAP can contribute towards this broader picture.

*'Biodiversity is a quality of life issue. It is an integral part of our surroundings, giving us pleasure, interest, knowledge and understanding. It is an aspect of the overall aim of sustainable development to ensure a decent quality of life for all, now and for generations to come, and will be one key test of the success of this aim'.*

*Making Biodiversity Happen (2000)*

The Sussex Urban BAP provides a framework for local action and the rest of the document will concentrate on what can be achieved in the urban areas of Sussex.

The Sussex Urban BAP is part of the Sussex Biodiver

targets and actions that cover the urban areas. The local Biodiversity Actions Plans at a district, borough, parish or neighbourhood level will identify much of the specific detail and ensure practical delivery of the targets.

The Sussex Urban BAP deals with inter-related themes that can be either incorporated or implemented alongside Community Plans, Sustainable Development Strategies and Local Agenda 21 initiatives. The development of wid



- **Frog, toad and great crested newt** populations making use of ponds in gardens.

Many of our towns are on the edge of the Downs that have been managed under an extensive grazing agricultural system. Local examples of remaining unimproved **chalk downland** in urban areas are found at:

- Bevendean Down and Whitehawk Hill in Brighton;
- Cissbury Ring on the edge of Worthing.

Remnants of **hay meadows** are found in the Weald at:

- Bedelands Farm, on the edge of Burgess Hill.

The changes in agricultural practice, particularly in the last 50 years, have had a major impact on biodiversity in the countryside.

These contain a variety of habitats that could include trees, grassland, hedgerows and ponds. Local examples found at Hotham Park in Bognor Regis and Preston Park in Brighton and Hove. The nature conservation value can be reduced through intensive management practices and over-use of pesticides. However, the more highly managed formal parks and gardens often retain a great deal of wildlife interest that could be enhanced by a change in management.

Although not original habitats, there are often informal areas of open space perhaps containing scrubby or grassy vegetation that have colonised an area naturally. These could include roadside verges and waste land on which plant communities have developed. This will include derelict or disused land, often referred to as a 'Brownfield site'. These are mostly unmanaged areas that have been naturally colonised by opportunistic plants called 'ruderals' and that have the potential to provide unique associations between local wildlife, habitats and people that are not found in the countryside. An excellent example is the Railway Land Local Nature Reserve in Lewes.

There are plant and animal species closely associated with the urban areas of

absorbed into urban areas and continue to act as im

Towns and cities in Sussex provide the environment where people are most likely to encounter biodiversity. Local parks, woods and green spaces bring experiences of the natural world which can be familiar and commonplace but nonetheless an integral part of daily life. Private gardens themselves, cumulatively, represent one of the largest amounts of green space in urban areas and can be very important for local urban biodiversity.

*'Parks and private gardens can be important for wildlife and 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*

Interest in gardening for wildlife is growing rapidly. The aggregate area of domestic gardens nationally is believed to be approximately two million ha, an area far greater than all the nature

RPG9 must be taken into account by Local Planning Authorities in preparing development plans and may be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

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The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 is the most significant piece of wildlife legislation to be passed since the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. Together, the two statutes provide for the protection of wildlife and outline the key responsibilities for wildlife protection and conservation.

Part III of the CRoW Act amends the law relating to

There are some examples of local authorities introducing a policy framework to protect biodiversity as part of the current and emerging Structure Plans and Local Plans in Sussex.

*'People need nature. With all the stresses and strains of urban living we feel better for it'*



- Biodiversity provides a range of associated benefits to urban areas. Trees filter noise and air pollution, and reedbeds can filter out water pollution in towns. Trees have in fact been shown to remove over 10 tonnes of damaging particulates daily whilst in tests in Nottingham it is calculated that trees reduce the concentration of sulphur and nitrogen dioxides by up to 5%.
- There is increasing evidence of the wide range of benefits that trees and woodlands provide for people. In an urban environment, trees can save up to 10% of energy consumption through their moderation of the local climate. They also stabilise the soil, prevent erosion, reduce the effects of air pollution & storm-water run-off and aid land reclamation.
- There are strong traditional a9.79-2.16558(t)-2.165247(u)-0.295585(p)-10.3.99941 0 0 1 62.4 635.2(

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Public bodies such as Local Authorities exert a great degree of influence over land management.

The Landfill tax credit scheme will fund environmental projects for example the SEAGULL project at Lidsey in West Sussex.

There are a number of grants from lottery sources.





Kim Gregory	Horsham
Libby Hodd	BTCV (Brighton & Hove)
Yvonne McDermott	Horsham District Council
Andy Phillips	Sussex Biodiversity Partnership Officer
Graham Roberts	Sussex Ornithological Society
Roy Ticehurst	Friends of Bedelands Farm
Yvonne Trchalik	Green Gym, BTCV
Andy Deacon	Sussex Air Quality Steering Group

- Circulated to all Local Authorities in East and West Sussex in April 2000
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The table summarises the extent and variety of work underway in urban areas, as far as known. The summary will provide an overview for the Sussex Urban Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and will help to highlight examples of good practice. We want to fill the gaps! Please can you review the section relating to your area and make any amendments or additions to the information and return to:

Susan Wilson,  
Sussex Wildlife Trust,  
Henfield,  
West Sussex, BN5 9SD.  
Tel: 01273 497551 or e-mail: [susanwilson@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:susanwilson@sussexwt.org.uk)

*This table will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis as part of implementing the Sussex Urban BAP.*

#### **Explanation of headings used in the table.**

: Groups involved in biodiversity work in the urban areas of Sussex. The asterisk \* denotes a member of the Sussex Urban Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group.

Details/dates - Local/Structure Plan conservation policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Wildlife/Greenspace Strategies, Development Briefs that include wildlife guidance. Please indicate progress towards achieving relevant policies and concentrate on ones that effect urban areas.

: Land managed positively for wildlife e.g. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Parks, Public Open Spaces, Pocket Parks with designations and ownership either public or private. Please concentrate on sites in urban areas or land that is close to an urban population.

: Links with Local Agenda 21 activities, Friends of groups that look after specific sites, Environmental Forums, surveys of community attitudes, any partnership projects.

: Names of people and their area of work to contact for further information. A name with a double asterisk \*\* denotes a person with urban biodiversity expertise.









	Nature Conservation Strategy		Recycling schemes	

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	Set up in 1993 to bring together everyone involved in urban wildlife in the South East and to encourage further action.		Annual conferences for members of urban wildlife groups, EN, WTs, LAs and volunteers; Brighton in 1994 and Crawley in 1998.	Steve Berry (EN) Phil Belden (BUWG) Crispin Scott (National Trust)

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- Extract from Developing Naturally by Michael Oxford Obtaining Adequate Environmental Information pp73-74.

The first step in planning for no net loss is to compile enough information

To purchase a copy of Developing Naturally please contact:

M.J. Oxford

PO Box 1164

Pensford

Bristol

BS39 4YB