

The Future of Berwick's Wildlife

with a list of "important" wildlife sites in and around Berwick.

In late 2003, the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club were commissioned by Berwick Community Development Trust, under the Market Towns Initiative, to undertake a survey of wildlife habitats in and around Berwick. The survey took the form of a standard Phase 1 ecological survey, covering all the land on the seaward side of the A1 from the Scottish Border to Scremerston. The survey revealed most (but, especially because it was undertaken in winter, not all) of the important wildlife sites within the town and immediate surroundings. Copies of the report (Kanefsky, C *et al*, 2004. Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, *Berwick-upon-Tweed Urban Wildlife Habitat Survey*, unpublished document) have been lodged with both the County and District Councils and Berwick library

The Berwickshire Naturalists' report suggested setting up a local wildlife group, and Berwick Wildlife Group was the result. We (BWG) are concerned with the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats, mostly in and around the town. Group members spend many hours monitoring the local wildlife, and our projects include:

Publication of monthly Wildlife Reviews, records from enthusiasts in the area.

Bat Surveys in Berwick upon Tweed, 2006, 2007 and 2008
Information on red and grey squirrels locally.

Birds on the Tweed Estuary in winter, (annual mapping exercise, 2005-2008)
Monthly counts of shore birds on Tweed Estuary and Coast from Spittal to Cocklawburn (part of Wetland Bird Survey for BTO carried out by a member, several years' data available).

Birds around Scremerston (survey for BTO Atlas 2007-11), and coverage of many other tetrads.

Wagtails in Tapee Fen (several years' counts of roosting Pied Wagtails)
Common Bird Census, Magdalene Fields Golf Course Roughs, 2005

Butterflies transect in Tommy the Millers Field 2006-2008 and at Cocklawburn Dunes 2008.

Information on bumblebees in local gardens, 2007 and 2008.

Study of Flower-rich Road Verges near Berwick upon Tweed, 2006.

Survey of Town Trees (some parts of Berwick, 2007, and Ord Drive 2007&2008)

Goody Patchy – plant lists, etc (2006, 2007)

Creeping Buttercup survey in Tommy the Millers Field (2008)

Information on rubbish on Little and Pier Road Beaches (for Marine Conservation), 2007 and 2008.

Fixed point photographs (for Natural England) at Cocklawburn Dunes (2008).

Between them, BWG members are building up a considerable body of information and expertise relating to the local fauna and flora, and we are always ready to assess an area and make suggestions for further study or for protection and management.

We have taken an active part in the consultation exercises relating to the Future of Berwick. Even so we feel that the various consultants do not fully understand or appreciate the value of the natural (as opposed to the built) environment in Berwick. Urban and suburban wildlife habitats are becoming ever more important as refuges for beleaguered wildlife when agricultural land is (and will be more) intensively used. Wildlife and wild areas, even small semi-natural sites, are now seen as essential to human life, part of the system which (by holding and recycling water, carbon, oxygen and so on) keeps us all alive. Such areas are also extremely attractive, in Berwick's case forming an outstanding part of the town's character, greatly enriching the residents' quality of life and helping to bring in tourists (those who come specifically to see wildlife and those just appreciating "peace and quiet").

The Berwickshire Naturalists' Club Survey identified 26 of the "best" wildlife sites in the Berwick area. Our work has shown that most of these sites are, if anything, even more valuable than originally supposed, and has also revealed others equally good. We would like to see all these (and the wildlife corridors linking them) given suitable respect and protection by planners and developers. They are:

Officially designated sites:

Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast NU206 401. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and including Northumberland Shore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and part of Lindisfarne SSSI

River Tweed NT 503338. SAC and SSSI

Tweed Estuary. NT 993 531. SAC and SSSI

In addition, the coast south of Spittal is included in **the Northumberland Coast AONB** and both this and the coast north of the Tweed as far as the Scottish Border form part of the **North Northumberland Heritage Coast**

Sites recognised by Northumberland Wildlife Trust as of Special Nature Conservation Interest:

Sea cliffs from Marshall Meadows to Berwick NT 993 555

Tapee Fen NT995 537

Other sites (or parts of sites above) particularly important for wildlife

Marshall Meadows Dene NT 980 566

Follyburn Dene NT 984 560

Needle's Eye area NT 993 555

Magdalene Golf Course roughs NT 988 543

Little Beach dunes and dune grassland NU 006 527

Little Beach foreshore NU 007 526

Berwick Cemetery NT 993 542

Tommy-the-Miller's Field NT 992 535

The New Road NT 992 535

Castle Vale NT 994 534

Castlehills NT 988 535

Letham Plantation NT 980 532

New Water Haugh NT 975 525

Whiteadder mouth NT 972 519

Clayhole scrub NT 975 516

Yarrow Point, Haugh and Slake NT 984 530

Berwick Ramparts NT 996 531

The Ditches NT 002 528

Berwick Parish churchyard NU 000 532

Tweedmouth cemetery NT 997 512

Tweedmouth Parish churchyard NT 996 522

The Goody Patchy NT 998 519

Sandstell Dunes NU 003 519

Cliffs, Spittal to Sea House NU 014 507

Borewell old mine workings and Waggonway NU 012 501

Heathery Tops farm pond NU 002 502

Windyridge rookery NU 016 493

Restoration Wood NU 010 490

Scremerston Parish churchyard NU 007 493

Cocklawburn shore, dunes and pond NU 035 477

Further information. Details of SACs are given on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's website <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-23> , of SSSIs on Natural England's site <http://www.english-nature.org.uk/Special/sssi/search.cfm> , accounts of many of the other sites are given in the Berwickshire Naturalists' report, (available in Berwick Library) and BWG's surveys can be downloaded from our website (www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk). Paper copies of these can often be provided at cost. However this information is not always easy to access, sites and especially site boundaries may be difficult to identify exactly, and new discoveries are constantly being made. We intend to provide Berwick Borough Council with a map showing all the sites mentioned above, and a document giving an outline of the most important features of each site as is currently understood. This can be handed on to the new local authority.

Berwick Wildlife Group

18th July 2008