

EDUCATION AWARENESS INVOLVEMENT

Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership

1 INTRODUCTION

Biodiversity includes all species of plants and animals, their habitats, and the complex ecosystems that sustain them. Biodiversity is essential to our lives. Contact with nature enriches our quality of life, and living things provide food, medicines and the raw materials for many everyday objects. Plants also help to clean pollutants from the air, regulate the temperature and provide the oxygen that we breathe. The loss of biodiversity is important to everyone.

One of the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Hampshire is to increase understanding of, and support for, biodiversity throughout the county. Volume One of the Plan identifies the need to raise awareness and encourage involvement in biodiversity conservation, and sets out a number of actions to begin a co-ordinated programme. Action includes the establishment of an Education and Awareness Group of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership, and the preparation of an Action Plan for Education, Awareness and Involvement¹.

Understanding of biodiversity conservation is crucial to the success of biodiversity programmes throughout the UK. Biodiversity and nature conservation are the concern of a relatively small number of individuals and organisations, and consequently, losses of plants, animals and their habitats continue. This highlights a clear need to raise widespread awareness and concern.

Research by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group² shows that understanding and interest in biodiversity varies considerably between different sectors of society. Not surprisingly, those individuals and organisations with direct links to the environment have a greater understanding. In addition, public awareness of other environmental issues – such as energy use, transport and waste – is generally increasing, but connections with biodiversity are seldom made. Highlighting the link between biodiversity and problems such as increasing energy use and escalating waste would help to spread concern about biodiversity too. There is also a particular lack of awareness of local biodiversity issues as opposed to more familiar environmental problems on a global scale.

Messages about biodiversity conservation need to reach decision-makers in key sectors of society, children at school, students at college or university, and individuals at their place of work – indeed, people everywhere in their daily lives. Messages need to be simple, relevant, easily accessible and sufficiently compelling to elicit changes in people's attitudes towards the environment.

Purpose of this Plan

The aim of this Topic Action Plan is to assess the extent and effectiveness of current work in raising awareness of biodiversity in a number of key sectors in Hampshire, and to guide future action of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership and other organisations. The Plan does not deal with the many practical and policy-orientated activities for biodiversity conservation taking place throughout Hampshire. These are thoroughly reviewed in other species, habitat and topic action plans.

The objectives of this Action Plan are to:

- **develop public awareness of the importance and value of biodiversity, and encourage public involvement in biodiversity conservation**
- **promote and develop knowledge and awareness of biodiversity as an important component of formal education**
- **develop awareness and understanding of biodiversity issues in other key sectors and encourage involvement of these sectors in conserving biodiversity**
- **promote full involvement of members of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership in implementing the action set out in the BAP for Hampshire**
- **raise awareness of the BAP for Hampshire and its objectives.**

The Plan focuses on raising awareness of biodiversity in six key sectors:

- **local government**
- **farmers and landowners**
- **business and industry**

TOPIC
ACTION
PLAN

- **formal education**
- **community groups**
- **individuals.**

Each key sector has a distinct role to play in biodiversity conservation. Each has reached a different level of awareness, and will have a different degree of responsibility.

The Plan:

- **summarizes current initiatives in raising awareness of each sector and key factors hindering progress**
- **formulates specific actions for raising awareness and involvement of each sector**
- **identifies key agencies for delivery of each action.**

Although each sector has a distinct role, there is some overlap and inter-relationship between them too. It is useful, however, to identify the main priorities for raising awareness in each key sector.

In addition to action targeted at individual sectors, the Plan also identifies a number of general actions that cut across the key sectors, including initiatives such as promoting biodiversity through the media and developing key biodiversity messages (see section 7 of the action table).

Due to the nature of this Plan, many actions do not have numerical targets and cannot be precisely measured. However progress within each action will be monitored by the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership. The Plan itself will be periodically reviewed to take stock of achievements and re-focus priorities and resources.

The Topic Action Plan for Education, Awareness and Involvement will build on existing initiatives and structures, and pave the way for a more focussed and co-ordinated approach. Implementation will require new ways of thinking, new resources, greater levels of commitment, and a number of alliances between those already involved in biodiversity conservation and others who have just begun to explore their role.

2 CURRENT ACTION

There are many initiatives aimed at raising awareness and increasing involvement in biodiversity conservation. Many of these do not use the term 'biodiversity', but more familiar terms such as 'nature conservation' or 'environmental education'. This section

does not attempt to catalogue the complete suite of awareness-raising activities, but instead gives a flavour of the range and type of activities taking place in Hampshire. National initiatives in raising awareness of biodiversity are also mentioned where relevant.

A 'public awareness and communication strategy' for biodiversity in England is being prepared under the national biodiversity programme. The strategy will include an assessment of current levels of awareness in key sectors and a summary of current initiatives³.

Guidance on incorporating education and awareness into local biodiversity action plans has been published by the Council for Environmental Education (CEE)⁴. This is one of a series of Guidance Notes produced by the England Biodiversity Group. In a linked initiative, seven pilot projects have been undertaken to assess awareness of biodiversity in key sectors, and to identify the best mechanisms for promoting the biodiversity message⁵. Results from the pilot projects will be included in a future edition of the CEE guidance note.

There are a number of issues or factors hindering progress in raising biodiversity awareness. Most commonly, a lack of resources prevents progress in spreading the biodiversity message rather than an unwillingness to embrace the need for conservation. General issues impeding progress include lack of staff and poor understanding in some sectors of what biodiversity actually means. Poor co-ordination between organisations and lack of communication between policy makers and grassroots level can also hinder progress. The review of current action outlined for each sector below also includes a review of issues specific to each sector.

Local Government

In Hampshire, local government includes Hampshire County Council, the eleven district or borough councils, and the two unitary authorities of Southampton and Portsmouth. The broad objective for this sector is to raise awareness of biodiversity within local government and to stimulate each authority to take action.

It is important to raise awareness and encourage greater involvement of local government for a number of reasons. Local authorities have a large interface with the public. They have many opportunities to spread awareness of biodiversity to

**TOPIC
ACTION
PLAN**

individuals through their considerable network of public venues such as libraries, museums, visitor centres, town halls and other information centres. Local authorities also have a very wide remit. There is great scope for incorporating biodiversity objectives into a broad range of activities from transport planning to education and the management of all local authority owned land.

Each local authority in the county has played a part in formulating the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire. All are members of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership and have signed up to taking action to conserve biodiversity.

The BAP for Hampshire has been adopted by Hampshire County Council, and action for biodiversity is set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy. Work is centred in two departments: Planning and Arts, Countryside and Community. Biodiversity objectives are also being integrated into the work of other departments, helping to raise awareness of elected members and officers who do not normally deal with this subject. New initiatives are also being incorporated into the County Council's existing activity for nature conservation.

Several district and borough councils and unitary authorities have nature conservation programmes, with most work being done by planning or countryside and parks staff. Eastleigh Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council are preparing local BAPs, a process that in itself raises awareness and involvement amongst staff, elected members and the local community. Raising awareness of biodiversity within district councils is generally hampered by a lack of financial support and staff dealing specifically with these issues.

There are few national initiatives that aim to raise awareness of biodiversity in local authorities. For example, biodiversity is not a topic that is being comprehensively addressed by the Local Government Association. However, the England Local Issues Advisory Group (LIAG), with the (then) Local Government Management Board and UK Biodiversity Group, has produced a series of guidance notes for local authorities and others involved in the preparation of local biodiversity action plans⁶.

LIAG has also produced a selection of case studies to provide practical examples of local BAP initiatives⁷, and with the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) have produced guidance for incorporating education and awareness into local

biodiversity planning (see box above). The Royal Town Planning Institute has also published an advisory guide 'Planning for Biodiversity'⁸.

Although all local authorities have Local Agenda 21 programmes, many do not encompass biodiversity. Nature conservation or biodiversity programmes are often confined to one or two local authority departments, with poor understanding or acceptance across the rest of the authority. Many of the proposed actions for local government (section 1 of the action table below), address the need to broaden awareness across all departments of local councils.

The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to produce "community strategies for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK". Each authority must develop a shared vision and strategy with the community. Many authorities are likely to subsume their Local Agenda 21 programmes into the community strategy process as there is much overlap.

Community strategies provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of biodiversity across each authority and throughout the community. The relationship between biodiversity and many other environmental or community concerns can be highlighted in each strategy giving new impetus to biodiversity conservation.

Through the process of 'Best Value', local authorities are required to review their work and deliver continuous improvements in their services to the community. As with community strategies, the Best Value process provides the opportunity to raise awareness of biodiversity across the local authority, review existing provision and develop new or improved approaches.

Farmers and Landowners

Farmers and other landowners have a strong influence on biodiversity. Land management activities such as agriculture and forestry play a pivotal role in determining the biodiversity of the countryside. In Hampshire, considerable tracts of land belong to large country estates or numerous individual landowners. The main objective for this key sector is to heighten the awareness amongst land owners and land managers of the crucial role that they play in biodiversity conservation.

**TOPIC
ACTION
PLAN**

Several important national and regional initiatives aim to broaden the environmental awareness of farmers and landowners. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is committed to integrating biodiversity issues into all its policies, with agri-environment schemes acting as the main delivery mechanism. At a local level, the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) is responsible for implementing MAFF schemes and promoting the concept of biodiversity to the farming community. FRCA Regional Biodiversity Co-ordinators oversee biodiversity programmes within FRCA.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) raises awareness amongst its members nationally and regionally through publications, campaigns and awards. Their recent 'Wildlife Watchers' campaign encouraged farmers to monitor a range of biodiversity flagship species, and the 'Millennium Avenues' project encourages farmers to plant native trees. 'Conserving Farmland Biodiversity' is one of the categories in the NFU President's Awards for NFU members and is awarded to farmers making outstanding contributions to protect farmland biodiversity. NFU national magazines and regional journals regularly feature conservation issues.

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) offers advice to farmers through their network of local advisors. FWAG is particularly keen to help farmers develop 'whole farm plans' for conservation through their 'Landwise' initiative. As part of the Landwise programme, FWAG advisors will help farmers produce a 'Farm Biodiversity Action Plan' which can include profiles for several species and habitats of local or national importance, and outline appropriate farm operations to conserve them. National farming agencies such as NFU and FWAG publish many leaflets on good practice for biodiversity.

The Game Conservancy Trust advises farmers and landowners on management techniques which will benefit game and biodiversity. The Trust publishes a variety of advisory material and has written the national Biodiversity Action Plan for Grey Partridge, for which it is the lead agency.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has launched a 'Volunteer and Farmer Alliance' in Hampshire where local volunteers survey farms for breeding birds and then produce an information pack on how to help each species. This information can be used in applications for funding under MAFF's Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The RSPB also organises a programme of

on-farm events and several projects aimed at enhancing farmland biodiversity.

Within Hampshire several other projects are helping to raise awareness of biodiversity amongst landowners and farmers. The 'Habitat Management Advisory Project' (run jointly by Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Wildlife Trust (HWT) and supported financially by some district councils and the Environment Agency) provides conservation advice to owners of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SINCs). HWT operate a similar project in the Avon Valley and West Hampshire. The 'Otters and Rivers Project' (HWT and the Environment Agency) gives advice to landowners specifically for riverine habitats.

Similarly, the County Council's 'Grazing Project', co-funded by English Nature, aims to raise awareness and develop approaches to the grazing of conservation sites. English Nature fund many biodiversity projects and also give advice to owners and occupiers of SSSIs. The 'Hampshire Farming Study'⁹, commissioned by the County Council, has also raised awareness of biodiversity in its review of farming in the county, as has the Committee for Rural Hampshire. As a result of the Hampshire Farming Study, a Hampshire Farming Partnership has been established to exchange information and promote good practice.

Sparsholt College organises a range of awareness raising activities beyond its primary role in formal education. The College holds periodic 'College and Farm Open Days', demonstrations, conferences and seminars. The RSPB Agricultural Education Advisor liaises regularly with Sparsholt College to lend support to its biodiversity programme, and the College is also the base for FWAG in Hampshire.

The Hampshire Wildlife Trust co-ordinated one of seven pilot projects undertaken across England to develop a framework for raising awareness and involvement of key sectors in the biodiversity planning process. HWT examined the farming sector in Hampshire, and the results will be included in a future edition of CEE national guidance on incorporating education and awareness into local BAPs⁴. The pilot project surveyed farm conservation advisors and NFU members in Hampshire to assess current awareness of biodiversity, and develop initiatives to raise awareness and involve farmers in achieving BAP objectives.

Business and Industry

Business and industry is diverse and includes all types and sizes of business

and commerce. This sector incorporates the manufacturing and service industries, development companies, financial institutions, and the professions, especially those – such as architecture, planning, landscape design, horticulture, science and engineering – with a particular influence on biodiversity. The broad objective for this sector is to encourage all businesses to consider the direct and indirect impacts of their actions on biodiversity and to draw business into implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Business and industry have an enormous influence on land-use and resource consumption and therefore a considerable role in the welfare of biodiversity. Key players in this sector such as developers, not only directly affect habitat and species through changes in land use, but also through influencing land prices and indeed providing new opportunities for habitat creation. Sustainable development and careful use of resources are increasingly accepted by Government as the way forward for the business sector, and biodiversity is a key indicator of sustainable development.

There are several business advice agencies in Hampshire, including three Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Hampshire County Council's Economic Development Office, the Confederation of British Industry, Enterprise Agencies, Hampshire Training and Enterprise Council, and the Southampton Environment Centre. The Hampshire Economic Partnership is a forum for economic issues, and Business Link connects business advice agencies in the county. There are also many professional associations with branches in Hampshire or the south-east.

The Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry (P&SEHCCI) has taken a lead in environmental matters by forming the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Business Environment Forum (on behalf of all the Hampshire Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the wider business community, including Government Office for the South East). The Forum has the support of an environment co-ordinator and is ideally placed to promote action for biodiversity within business and industry through its newly established Biodiversity Working Group. The Forum has been enthusiastically received and should greatly enhance the awareness of biodiversity across the business community.

At a national level, the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development has prepared a

booklet 'Business and Biodiversity'¹⁰ to help draw business into implementing the UK Biodiversity Programme. The guidance sets out how to integrate biodiversity into environmental management systems and is particularly relevant to large businesses. In another national initiative, the England Biodiversity Group (through its Public Awareness and Communication Sub-group (PACS)) has commissioned research into assessing current levels of awareness of biodiversity amongst industry. Results will be incorporated into the national biodiversity awareness and communication strategy mentioned previously.

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) promotes economic development in the region. It's publication 'Building a World Class Region – An Economic Strategy for the South East of England', refers to the need to take account of biodiversity in integrating economic development and care for the environment. The strategy is at an early stage, so it is not yet clear how the needs of biodiversity will be integrated into business development in practice.

The Wessex Coppice Group is a unique example of an industry with a specific aim to enhance biodiversity. The purpose of the Group is to support a thriving coppice industry whilst regenerating and enhancing woodlands throughout the region. The Group demonstrates the possibilities for linking a successful business with biodiversity conservation.

Formal Education

An essential objective of this Plan is to increase knowledge and understanding of biodiversity throughout the formal education sector, from primary to secondary school and onto further and higher education. Understanding and respect for nature and the environment can be introduced to children at a very early age and fostered throughout their education career.

Since September 2000, 'education for sustainable development' (ESD) has been a statutory requirement under the National Curriculum. ESD embraces biodiversity and environmental education and covers concepts such as the interdependence of society and the natural environment, and respect for biodiversity. Although not a separate subject, ESD will be specifically catered for in Geography, Science, and Design and Technology.

In tandem with the statutory requirement, there is considerable activity in formulating

**TOPIC
ACTION
PLAN**

national guidelines and strategies for biodiversity education. The Council for Environmental Education's Biodiversity Education Strategy Group is spearheading a number of initiatives including training sessions and workshops, work with pilot areas, seminars on biodiversity and formal education for key decision makers, and publications such as 'Educating for Life: Guidelines for Biodiversity Education'¹¹.

The England Biodiversity Group's Public Awareness and Communication Sub-group is assessing current levels of awareness of biodiversity in the education sector. This work is being undertaken in a limited area but will assist the formulation of the strategy for biodiversity education and awareness throughout England mentioned above.

Several national associations are also concerned with biodiversity education. The National Association of Field Studies Officers, the Geographical Association, and the Association for Science Educators run conferences and produce curriculum materials on both biodiversity and sustainability. Other organisations such as the RSPB produce resources for schools, including newsletters and a website with pages for teachers and pupils.

In Hampshire, the two unitary authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton are responsible for education services within their areas, with Hampshire County Council covering the rest of the county. The Hampshire Inspection & Advisory Service (HIAS) is an agency of the County Council and is the main focus for environmental education work throughout Hampshire. Staff of HIAS provide advice on environmental education across all key stages, run in-service training courses, and write curriculum materials in addition to their other main work of inspections for OFSTED. Portsmouth and Southampton Education Departments have their own science/environment inspectors but also use the expertise of HIAS.

School grounds provide a readily-accessible opportunity for learning about biodiversity and the local environment. For primary and secondary schools keen to enhance the education and nature conservation value of their grounds, there is a considerable range of support. The national organisation Learning through Landscapes (LTL) is based in Hampshire and runs an advisory service for using school grounds for environmental studies and many other areas of the curriculum.

The Schools Landscape Project (SLP) within the County Council works with a number of

Hampshire schools each year to enhance the environmental learning potential and quality of their grounds. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) work closely with the SLP in selected schools, but also run a separate support and advisory service for over 200 schools throughout Hampshire each year. Several boroughs councils (eg. Basingstoke and Deane, Hart and Fareham) also assist schools with projects in their grounds.

Beyond school grounds there are many other venues where groups can learn about nature at first-hand. Local authorities and voluntary organisations run many nature reserves, urban nature areas and countryside sites, some with purpose-built field study centres.

Hampshire County Council runs five study centres (Stubbington, Minstead, Calshot, Bramley Frith and Sparsholt Schools' Centre) and support a number of others (eg. Gilbert White Study Centre, Countryside Education Trust at Beaulieu, Marwell Zoo's Education Centre, and the Privett Centre in Basingstoke). HIAS have recently produced 'County Guidelines for Environmental Education'¹² which incorporates a precis of study centres run or supported by the County Council.

The County Council's Museum Service runs SEARCH – a hands-on education centre for history and natural history in Gosport. Minibeasts, animal classification, food chains and animals in winter are some of the topics available for group sessions.

Additional education centres are available at a number of venues such as Queen Elizabeth Country Park (QECP), Itchen Valley Country Park, Oxstall Meadow, Lepe Country Park, Blashford Lakes, Swanwick and the Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre in Southampton. Most of these centres produce information packs for teachers to use on site or as follow-up activities back in the classroom. HWT also produce education packs for several of their nature reserves.

BTCV has established six environmental education forums in Hampshire for parents, teachers and governors. These provide a supportive network for people involved or interested in establishing environmental projects. Both BTCV and HWT run training courses for teachers, independently or in conjunction with the education authorities. Several conservation agencies (eg. BTCV, HWT and Gosport Groundwork Trust) employ education officers to co-ordinate work with schools, and HCC have an education officer at QECP.

At tertiary level, Farnborough College of Technology, the University of Portsmouth, the University of Southampton and Sparsholt College all offer courses related to biodiversity. Farnborough College offers both an HND and BSc in Environmental Protection that focus on conservation management for biodiversity. The University of Southampton has a BSc and MEnvSci, both of which offer biodiversity and ecology as main subjects of study. Sparsholt College is one of the largest colleges in the UK to specialise in the land-based industries, and provides courses in wildlife and countryside management at a range of levels from practical to academic.

Although there is much activity in biodiversity education, there are a number of issues hindering progress. Central support for environmental education in Hampshire is limited and relies on HIAS staff who have many other responsibilities. There is also insufficient curriculum support material and teacher training in biodiversity education across the key stages.

There is a need for more co-ordination of environmental education with greater emphasis on biodiversity. Opportunities and support for 'hands-on experience' needs to be extended, and more curriculum materials produced. One of the aims of Hampshire County Council's Corporate Strategy is to develop a strategy for environmental education. It will be particularly important for this to incorporate the objectives of this Topic Action Plan, and address the issues of co-ordination, central support and resources needed to strengthen environmental education.

Community Groups

Community groups have considerable opportunities to influence the local environment. This key sector includes groups joined by their locality, or those that share a common interest, for example scouts and guides, red cross, churches and faiths, women's institutes and a large number of other local societies and associations. The main objective is to raise awareness of biodiversity amongst community groups to encourage them to take action for conservation locally.

Environmental organisations and local authorities both have a vital role in spreading awareness of biodiversity issues to local communities. Many have large and varied programmes of talks and guided walks about wildlife and nature conservation and a wealth of projects to encourage a more 'hands on' approach. A number of key organisations

play a strategic role in community work: Hampshire Wildlife Trust (HWT), British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), Butterfly Conservation, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the countryside management projects of many local authorities.

Through their Wildlife Awareness Team, HWT encourages parish councils and community groups to undertake environmental projects. These can include surveys, practical management work, or celebratory projects. HWT's Avon Valley and West Hampshire Project promotes the management of wildlife sites by landowners and community groups working together.

The Trust also has a programme to encourage action for biodiversity in urban areas co-ordinated by an urban officer, and their marine conservation officer also has a wide-ranging education remit. HWT co-ordinates a scheme for tree wardens who work on a community basis giving advice on trees and woodlands, and also operates Wildlife Watch groups across Hampshire. Watch is a club for children that aims to develop a caring attitude to wildlife and the environment amongst its school-age members. Similarly, RSPB operate Wildlife Explorer Clubs in schools and other venues, Phoenix Clubs for over thirteen's, and four groups for adult members in Hampshire.

BTCV is also a key player in raising awareness of biodiversity in the community through the establishment and support of community groups involved in environmental projects. BTCV gives guidance on all aspects of conservation projects to local communities and schools throughout the county. BTCV also run Pond Warden and Natural Pioneers Award training schemes, other training courses, and various school and group fora. In Hampshire, 160 groups and schools are affiliated to BTCV, which gives them access to information, advice, insurance, free tools loan, publicity materials and conservation grants. BTCV aims to develop people's skills and self-confidence to enable them to help protect the environment.

Hampshire County Council funds projects developed and undertaken by community groups under its Community Action Fund. The County Council also provides grant-aid to environmental groups such as BTCV that work with the community. Specific projects run by the County Council involving community groups include the Heathland Project, Road Verge Management Project, and Forests of Bere and Eversley.

**TOPIC
ACTION
PLAN**

Many district councils work directly with groups of volunteers carrying out nature conservation management work and conservation monitoring on council land, or give grant-aid to communities for their own local projects. Many also run a variety of schemes and campaigns for wildlife: for example, Eastleigh Borough Council's pond campaign involved community groups in restoring ponds in the borough. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have a community woodland project in association with HWT, Havant Borough Council are working with BTCV on woodland management projects, and East Hampshire District Council is taking particular care to involve community groups in the preparation of their biodiversity action plan.

Local Agenda 21 programmes, Community Strategies and local biodiversity action plans give local authorities additional opportunities and act as ideal platforms for spreading awareness and involving communities in environmental issues.

Individuals

Action for biodiversity will improve the quality of everyone's life. But this message has not reached the general public or is not sufficiently understood. A major objective of this Action Plan is to develop public awareness of the importance and value of biodiversity, and encourage public involvement in biodiversity conservation. Raising the awareness of individuals would help to change attitudes and alter some of the daily choices that people make that have an impact on biodiversity: for example, methods of transport, use of energy, and choice of consumer goods.

Raising public awareness of biodiversity is at a very early stage of development. Local authorities and environmental groups produce many leaflets and other information materials on nature conservation and wildlife, but these are largely distributed to people who already have an interest in these subjects. In addition, Local Agenda 21 programmes have not always been used to full effect to foster awareness of biodiversity conservation.

Enhancing awareness is largely done through traditional methods. For example, Hampshire County Council produces many leaflets on wildlife walks, talks and other events through its Countryside Service. The County Council also publishes booklets on various aspects of nature conservation and displays information on natural science and the environment in museums at Andover, Alton, Basingstoke, Fareham and Gosport.

Borough and district councils and unitary authorities also produce many leaflets and displays and organise a variety of wildlife events. For example, Southampton City Council has a wildlife garden category as part of 'Southampton in Bloom'.

Many voluntary organisations such as HWT, RSPB, and Butterfly Conservation offer a programme of talks and guided walks, open days at their nature reserves, and produce excellent interpretation boards, leaflets and other literature. HWT run a wildlife gardening project to encourage people to take care of wildlife in their own backyard and also involve individuals in the collection of species data. BTCV produces literature and technical support materials for groups and schools which are widely distributed throughout the county. These also go to local authorities, councils of community service, libraries and other public information points.

Nevertheless all of these excellent materials and events largely reach people who already have an interest in the environment. There is scope to develop the role of information centres, libraries, museums and council office reception areas in disseminating much more information about biodiversity.

On a national scale there are two mass-appeal environmental campaigns that aim to have a significant impact on the public: 'Going for Green' and 'Are You Doing Your Bit?'. Both campaigns aim to bolster the many local initiatives already taking place by giving key environmental messages to the public through national newspapers, radio and television.

Going for Green is the biggest environmental campaign ever in the UK. It has five major themes, including 'looking after the local environment', where people are encouraged to help create and maintain areas for wildlife. April is 'Local Environment/Biodiversity Theme Month', and organisations are encouraged to run special events on biodiversity during this month each year.

'Are You Doing Your Bit' is a high-profile publicity campaign to encourage people to help protect and improve the environment. However, no specific mention of biodiversity is made in the campaigns key messages which focus on transport, climate change and energy efficiency, water use, and waste.

As yet, there is no widespread approach to putting across the biodiversity message in simple terms that are relevant and easily accessible to everyone. The media could be used to much greater effect. A comprehensive communication plan should

Education Awareness Involvement

be drawn up and include strong key messages for a variety of target audiences. Mainstream, specialist and online media could be engaged to disseminate biodiversity messages to a much broader spectrum of

society. Making links between loss of biodiversity and more high profile issues such as pollution and global warming would shift awareness of biodiversity to much greater levels.

3 PROPOSED ACTION

Specific actions have been formulated for raising the awareness and involvement of each of the six key sectors. A number of general actions that cut across the key sectors have also been developed. All of these actions are given in the following table, along with an indication of the key partners and other organisations who will take the main responsibility for delivery of each action. Setting out specific actions in this way will guide future work of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership, the Education and Awareness Group and other organisations. The actions set out in the table will be regularly monitored and the whole Plan will be reviewed and updated in 2005.

**TOPIC
ACTION
PLAN**

For each action, a simple assessment of priority has been made, either:

- 'R' required action, or
- 'D' desirable action.

The level of current activity associated with each action is not necessarily related to its priority rating. For example, a new initiative will not necessarily have a higher priority.

Many of the actions listed in the table may already be underway or have some current activity associated with them, but this varies considerably. Some are fairly well developed, yet others are at a very early stage.

- 'N' indicates actions that are totally new, or where there is very minimal current practice.

For all actions in the table, at whatever stage, work is needed to support and further develop the activities. The aim is to ensure that awareness and involvement in biodiversity conservation continues to grow.

	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		PRIORITY
		Key Partner(s)	Others	R required D desirable N new action
1 Local Government				
1.1	Ensure that Local Agenda 21 programmes and community strategies incorporate action for biodiversity	LAs		R
1.2	Support and encourage district councils in the preparation of their local biodiversity action plans	HCC	EN,HWT,EA	R
1.3	Identify links between biodiversity issues and all other activities/responsibilities of the local authority and develop strategies to advance biodiversity programmes	LAs		R
1.4	Ensure that biodiversity is fully considered during the Best Value review process to raise awareness and secure maximum provision for biodiversity programmes	LAs		R N
1.5	Develop Members awareness of, and support for, biodiversity	LAs		R
1.6	Develop corporate commitment and action for biodiversity across all departments through seminars and internal information systems such as newsletters, notice boards and electronic mail	LAs		D N
1.7	Include programmes for biodiversity in council corporate strategies and promote a vision of local authorities as 'investors in biodiversity'	LAs		R
1.8	Ensure that all development plans and other strategies incorporate biodiversity issues	LAs	EN,EA, HWT, RSPB	R

Education Awareness Involvement

	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		PRIORITY
		Key Partner(s)	Others	R required D desirable N new action
1.9	Provide training to raise awareness of biodiversity issues amongst local authority staff at all levels as part of continued professional development	LAs	EN,HWT,EA, BTCV	D N
1.10	Employ specialist staff to oversee formulation and implementation of biodiversity programmes	LAs		R N
2 Farmers and Landowners				
2.1	Review all existing guidance on good practice for biodiversity, and produce guide/index to the information available	HCC,HWT	MAFF,NFU, FRCA,CLA, FWAG,GCT, EA,RSPB,EN	R N
2.2	Promote awareness of projects and schemes that support good practice for biodiversity eg. SINC Project, Avon Valley Project, FWAG, Countryside Stewardship, Grazing Project, AONB's, ESA's	HCC,HWT, MAFF,EA, FRCA,EN, FWAG,FC, RSPB	CLA,NFU, GCT	R
2.3	Produce a newsletter providing information on projects and schemes outlined in 2.2 above	HCC,HWT	CLA,NFU	D N
2.4	Continue to develop awareness of biodiversity and promote relevant initiatives through the Committee for Rural Hampshire and the Hampshire Farming Partnership	HCC	CLA,NFU	D
2.5	Promote the development of demonstration farms, woodlands and other enterprises that show good practice for biodiversity	MAFF, FRCA, FWAG,FC	HCC,NFU, CLA,GCT, LEAF, HWT,RSPB	D N
2.6	Promote existing fora/networks that exchange information on good practice for biodiversity and establish additional networks as appropriate	HCC,NFU, CLA,LEAF	HWT, RSPB	D
2.7	Promote and assist with the production of whole farm management plans and farm biodiversity action plans	FWAG	FRCA,HCC, HWT, MAFF, RSPB	R
2.8	Promote biodiversity and relevant projects at agricultural shows and other appropriate venues	FWAG,HCC, HWT	NFU,CLA, MAFF,GCT, SC,FRCA, RSPB	D N
2.9	Identify and promote regional/national initiatives such as calendars, leaflets and award schemes directed at increasing awareness of biodiversity	CLA,NFU	FWAG, MAFF, FRCA,FC,EN, HWT,RSPB	D N
2.10	Make use of all existing mechanisms such as newsletters, advisory leaflets etc. for getting information about biodiversity to farmers	CLA,NFU, GCT	FWAG, MAFF,SC, FRCA,FC,EN, HWT,RSPB	R N
2.11	Promote biodiversity to Young Farmers Clubs	NFU		D N
2.12	Promote biodiversity as a substantial topic in the curriculum of agricultural colleges	HCC,SC	RSPB	D N
3 Business and Industry				
3.1	Continue liaison between the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Business Environment Forum (through its Biodiversity Working Group)	Actions for business and industry are, in the first instance, to be promoted by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Business Environment Forum and its Biodiversity Working Group (established by the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry). The Forum will take a lead role in developing the network necessary to take actions 3.1 – 3.13 forward.		
3.2	Promote biodiversity through the work of existing business advice networks such as Green Business Clubs and Chambers of Commerce & Industry, and professional associations			
3.3	Encourage business sponsorship of biodiversity projects and programmes			
3.4	Encourage companies to carry out a biodiversity audit of their own property/landholdings and produce a biodiversity action plan			

Education Awareness Involvement

	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		PRIORITY
		Key Partner(s)	Others	R required D desirable N new action
3.5	Promote awareness of businesses that carry out good practice for biodiversity as an example for others			
3.6	Develop award schemes for companies carrying out good practice for biodiversity			
3.7	Review and disseminate existing information on involving companies in biodiversity conservation eg. Business and Biodiversity ¹⁰ , Are You Doing Your Bit campaign			
3.8	Promote the inclusion of biodiversity in economic development strategies and the work of agencies such as SEEDA			
3.9	Provide training to raise awareness of biodiversity issues in the business and professional community			
3.10	Encourage the inclusion of biodiversity issues in the job of environmental managers			
3.11	Encourage partnerships between local businesses and local wildlife organisations			
3.12	Provide information on how business and industry can assist biodiversity conservation and the benefits to business of taking such measures			
3.13	Encourage business to establish environmental management systems to improve their environmental performance, including provision for biodiversity			
4 Formal Education				
4.1	Interpret the provision for biodiversity education in the National Curriculum and disseminate to teachers	HCC	CEE,RSPB	R
4.2	Promote the introduction of biodiversity into initial teacher training and continued professional development programmes	HCC,UAs	U of S, KAC	R N
4.3	Audit existing information materials relevant to biodiversity and produce an index for schools	HCC		R N
4.4	Produce additional curriculum support materials on biodiversity for each Key Stage after identifying gaps in existing information (see 4.3)	HCC		R N
4.5	Ensure adequate resources within education authorities to support biodiversity education	HCC,UAs		R N
4.6	Reinforce biodiversity as a key topic in the programmes of study centres such as those at Marwell Zoo, Hilliers Arboretum, Sparsholt Agricultural College, Minstead, Calshot etc.	Study Centres	HCC,UAs	R
4.7	Promote greater use of study centres for school parties and other groups	HCC,UAs	HWT	D
4.8	Establish standards and provide additional training for staff based at study centres	HCC,UAs	BTCV, HWT	R N
4.9	Establish a project linking schools with practical initiatives on wildlife sites such as HWT nature reserves and HCC Countryside Sites	HCC,HWT	RSPB	D N
4.10	Identify and promote the use of other informal venues for biodiversity education such as Sealife Centres and Birdworld	EAG		D N
4.11	Review schools' awareness and use of current resources such as their own school grounds, study centres, nature reserves, grant-aid etc. and provide an information circular as appropriate	HCC,UAs	HWT, BTCV	R N
4.12	Promote and support the activities of HCC Schools Landscape Project, BTCV school advisory service, Learning through Landscapes, HWT education service and education officer at Gosport Groundwork	HCC,HWT LTL,BTCV,GG		R

Education Awareness Involvement

	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		PRIORITY
		Key Partner(s)	Others	R required D desirable N new action
4.13	Promote the establishment and appropriate use of school nature clubs, school wildlife areas, and use of school grounds as 'outdoor classrooms'	HCC,UAs, LTL,HWT, BTCV	RSPB	R
4.14	Promote within schools relevant initiatives such as National Tree Week, LTL's School Grounds Week, Going for Green's Biodiversity Month, NFU's Living Classrooms Initiative, the Wildlife Trusts WATCH scheme and RSPB Wildlife Explorers Clubs	HCC	BTCV, HWT,NFU, LTL,GFG, RSPB	D
4.15	Promote biodiversity as an important component of wider environmental education initiatives and awards	HCC		D N
4.16	Promote and develop existing biodiversity education fora as support networks for schools and establish new fora as needed	HCC, UAs, BTCV	HWT,NFU	R
4.17	Ensure that data on Hampshire's biodiversity is accessible to schools	HCC,HWT		D N
4.18	Develop a biodiversity education web site	HCC		R N
5 Community Groups				
5.1	Provide information on biodiversity to all Parish and Town Councils through existing networks	HAPTC, HWT,BTCV	Las	R N
5.2	Identify existing mechanisms for disseminating information on biodiversity to community groups such as Women's Institutes, Scouts and Guides, Resident and Tenant Associations	HWT	RSPB	D N
5.3	Promote and support initiatives that involve community groups eg. tree wardens, village appraisals, neighbourhood nature areas and pond wardens	HWT,BTCV	Las	R
5.4	Develop community award schemes for biodiversity projects	HWT	Las	D N
5.5	Promote and support existing local environment schemes such as HWT's Wildlife Awareness Team and BTCV's education and community development work	HWT,BTCV	Las	R
5.6	Fully involve a wide spectrum of community groups in biodiversity issues as part of LA21 programmes and local authority Community Strategies	Las		D
6 Individuals				
6.1	Audit existing information on topics such as local wildlife and gardening for wildlife, and identify need for additional materials	EAG		R
6.2	Identify local information points and distribute information on biodiversity to them eg. libraries, museums, information centres, leisure centres and shopping centres	Las,HWT, BTCV		R N
6.3	Ensure that links are made between biodiversity conservation and other environmental concerns in all publications for the public on environmental matters eg. water and energy use, waste, shopping, car usage	Las		R N
6.4	Promote existing biodiversity campaigns directed at the public (such as gardening for wildlife, and campaigns for flagship species) and identify new campaigns	HWT,RSPB BTCV		D
6.5	Support existing opportunities for involving the public in biodiversity conservation (such as recording schemes and management work) and develop additional ways to reach new audiences	HWT,BTCV RSPB	Las	R N
6.6	Develop a greater biodiversity focus to activity programmes such as guided walks and evening talks and to existing interpretation facilities and materials	Las,HWT BTCV		D

Education Awareness Involvement

	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		PRIORITY
		Key Partner(s)	Others	R required D desirable N new action
6.7	Link activities to national schemes such as 'Going for Green', 'Are You Doing Your Bit' and 'Tidy Britain Group' where appropriate	LAs	HWT	D N
7 General Action				
7.1	Encourage all members of the HBP to audit their action in raising awareness of biodiversity	EAG		R N
7.2	Identify where specific partnerships need to be developed to implement the action set out in this Plan	EAG		R N
7.3	Review national guidance on promoting awareness of biodiversity and incorporate relevant action into updates of this Topic Action Plan	EAG		R N
7.4	Establish a comprehensive monitoring programme for the Biodiversity Action Plan to raise awareness of achievements and to identify outstanding action	HBP		R N
7.5	Promote the Hampshire Biological Record and the proposed Local Record Centre as the key source of information on the biodiversity of Hampshire	HCC,HWT		D
7.6	Maintain awareness, momentum and commitment within the Partnership through exchange of information and an annual meeting	EAG		R
7.7	Continue to produce regular newsletters for circulation to members of the HBP and others	EAG		R
7.8	Promote awareness of examples of good practice throughout the Partnership and to others via the media	EAG		D N
7.9	Develop key messages on biodiversity for each key sector and for use on all printed materials published by partners and others	EAG		R N
7.10	Set up a library of images for use by biodiversity partners in printed materials and displays	EAG		D N
7.11	Produce a guide to biodiversity for individual sectors	EAG		R N
7.12	Produce a mobile exhibition on biodiversity	EAG		D N
7.13	Develop a web site on biodiversity in Hampshire and make links with other relevant web sites	HCC	EAG	R N
7.14	Develop a communication plan to identify key media contacts and to formulate a co-ordinated strategy for publicity and promotion via the media, including television, radio, newspapers and specialist sectors of the press such as gardening, travel, and countryside activities. Engage media specialists as necessary.	EAG		R N

KEY TO ORGANISATIONS

BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	HBP	Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership
CEE	Council for Environmental Education	HCC	Hampshire County Council
CLA	Country Landowners Association	HWT	Hampshire Wildlife Trust
EA	Environment Agency	KAC	King Alfred's College
EAG	Education and Awareness Group (HBP)	LAs	Local Authorities
EN	English Nature	LTL	Learning through Landscapes
FC	Forestry Commission	LEAF	Linking Environment and Farming
FRCA	Farming and Rural Conservation Agency	MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	NFU	National Farmers Union
GCT	Game Conservancy Trust	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
GFG	Going for Green	UAs	Unitary Authorities of Southampton and Portsmouth
GG	Gosport Groundwork	UoS	University of Southampton
HAPTC	Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils		

REFERENCES

TOPIC
ACTION
PLAN

- 1 **Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire: Volume One**, Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership, Hampshire County Council, 1998, p. 61-62.
- 2 **Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report, Volume 1**, HMSO, 1995.
- 3 The Strategy is being prepared by the Public Awareness and Communication Sub-group (PACS) of the England Biodiversity Group.
- 4 **Education – Awareness to Action (Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans)**, Council for Environmental Education for the England Biodiversity Group, 2000.
- 5 This work is a partnership venture between the England Biodiversity Group, DETR, The Council for Environmental Education and The Wildlife Trusts (with Farnborough College and the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology). Pilot projects were undertaken during 1999 and 2000.
- 6 **Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans**, LGMB and UK Biodiversity Group, 1997. Available from The Biodiversity Secretariat, Tel: 0117 987 8974.
- 7 **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Case Studies**, UK Local Issues Advisory Group, 1999. Available from The Biodiversity Secretariat as above.
- 8 **Planning for Biodiversity : Good Practice Guide**, RTPi, 1999. Available from RTPi, Tel: 020 7636 9107.
- 9 **The Hampshire Farming Study**, Hampshire County Council, 1997.
- 10 **Business and Biodiversity: A UK Business Guide for Understanding and Integrating Nature Conservation and Biodiversity into Environmental Management Systems**, UK Round Table on Sustainable Development and Earthwatch, 1998, Available from Earthwatch, Tel: 01865 311600.
- 11 **Educating for Life: Guidelines for Biodiversity Education**, Council for Environmental Education, 1997. Available from CEE, Tel: 0118 950 2550.
- 12 **County Guidelines for Environmental Education: A Partnership between Hampshire County Council Schools and Study Centres**, HCC, 1999. Available from HCC Education Department.

This is one of many Habitat, Species and Topic Action Plans being prepared by the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership. It will be monitored by the Partnership and fully reviewed and updated in 2005.

This Topic Action Plan has been prepared by consultant Jacklyn Johnston and the Education and Awareness Group of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership.

For further information contact: David Pape, Hampshire County Council, Tel: 01962 846739.