

## SUMMARY OF BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (2004) SPECIES

Otters (*Lutra lutra*) were once more widely distributed than now. Evidence from neighbouring counties indicates that otters are increasing in number and it is important to ensure that conditions are favourable as they spread into the area.

Target area: any river valley but particularly the Trent Valley.

### *Actions:*

- providing cover in the form of riverside trees
- creating reedbeds
- protecting banks (fencing off cattle)
- creating buffer strips to prevent nutrient runoff into rivers
- Constructing otter holts in suitable locations

For further guidance on otters, contact: Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Wolseley Centre, Rugeley on 01889 880100, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, East Mill, Belper on 01773 881188; and Leicestershire Wildlife Trust, Brocks Hill Environment Centre, Oadby on 0116 272 0444

**Bats** (any species) are found across the Forest area. They require warm summer breeding roosts and cool, secure hibernation sites in winter. Many rely on old trees as roosts.

*Target area:* any woodland with large, mature trees but old parklands such as Melbourne Parklands, Needwood and Charnwood offer such habitat.

### *Actions:*

- retaining semi-natural woodland habitat which provides both roosting space and beetles on which the bats feed
- retaining old trees in existing woodland and in hedgerows
- installing bat boxes in woodlands which are suitable for foraging but which have few roost sites (i.e. semi-mature woods)
- reduce insecticide application which kills beetles on which the bats feed.

For constructing bat boxes the Bat Conservation Trust website [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk) The Wildlife Trusts can also offer advice on purchasing boxes.

**Redstart** (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) were once fairly common and widespread in the Forest area but is now an uncommon breeding species. It likes well-managed woodland with open understory and holes in trees. It feeds mainly on insects in holes in trees in open woodland and parkland and in hedgerow trees.

Target areas: there are some breeding pairs in Charnwood but other areas are suitable.

### *Actions*

- retention of existing hedgerow trees
- planting of new hedgerow trees

- appropriate management of existing woodland to retain open glades and light understory
- linking of existing woodland blocks with new planting of broadleaf species
- retention of streamside trees.

The Wildlife Trusts can also offer advice on constructing bird boxes.

**Black Poplar** (*Populus nigra* var. *betulifolia*) is now considered to be Britain's most threatened native timber tree. There are only a few thousand individuals left in the country as the result of removal of hedgerows, drainage of river valleys and removal of female trees to prevent fluffy seeds entering crops. Hybridisation with non-native trees is diluting the population.

Target area: river valleys, but particularly the Trent Valley

#### *Actions*

- planting of both sexes of true native black poplar as the species requires both males and females to be present for fertilisation
- retention of damp ground to enable seed to germinate
- pollarding of existing individuals
- retention of mature trees in hedgerows and woodlands

Suppliers of local native black poplar: contact the National Forest Company or the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

**Note: It is important to specify local (certainly British) native origin when ordering.**

**Adder** (*Vipera berus*) is widespread in the Forest area but is declining in numbers, due to agricultural intensification, development and scrubbing up suitable habitat, eg heathland. Preferred habitats include heathland and rides and clearings in woodland.

Target areas: heathland sites in Charnwood and old colliery sites in Ashby Woulds that are developing into heathland. Wide rides and glades in woodlands across the Forest.

#### *Actions:*

- creation of heathland on appropriate sites such as colliery spoil, thin soils
- creation of acid grassland and management of existing sites
- creation of wide sunny glades and rides in new planting schemes
- management of existing heathland, such as removal of birch or other scrub species.

Construction of artificial hibernacula/refugia - a simple sheet of corrugated iron provides a safe place in which reptiles can warm up.

**Ruddy Darter Dragonfly** (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) is dependent on wetlands and open water bodies. It breeds on the marshy margins of ponds, lakes, gravel pits, canals and ditches where there are tall emergent plants but which are not excessively overgrown. It likes to forage over scrub and rough grassland habitat around pools.

Target areas: any wetland, pond, ditch, lake.

*Actions*

- creation of large open water bodies and ponds with rough grassland around the edges
- creation of shallow marshy margins to ponds with emergent plants
- buffer strips along ditches and by pools to prevent nutrient runoff
- maintenance of water levels in ponds and ditches.

**Bluebell** (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is found primarily in broadleaved woodland. The UK is the centre of its European distribution and supports 30% of the world's population. Numbers are decreasing due to wholesale uprooting of plants and inappropriate woodland management. Muntjac deer graze bluebell bulbs.

Target areas: any broadleaved woodland.

*Actions:*

- appropriate management of broadleaved woodlands
- creation of new broadleaved woodlands
- planting of native bluebell bulbs into new woodlands
- protection from trampling by over-use and grazing by deer by use of deer fencing and joining the Deer Management Group for collaborative management.

Planting native bluebell bulbs: for suppliers or true native bulbs see [www.floralocale.org](http://www.floralocale.org) and search using 'suppliers'. Also consider:

Naturescape	01949 860592	<a href="http://www.naturescape.co.uk">www.naturescape.co.uk</a>
Landlife Wildflowers	01517 371819	<a href="http://www.wildflower.org.uk">www.wildflower.org.uk</a>
Really Wild Flowers	01747 811778	<a href="http://www.reallywildflowers.co.uk">www.reallywildflowers.co.uk</a>
Shipton Bulbs	01994 240125	<a href="http://www.bluebellbulbs.co.uk">www.bluebellbulbs.co.uk</a>

**Note: It is important to specify local (certainly British) native origin when ordering. It is vital not to plant the Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*) or its hybrids.**

**Barn Owls** (*Tyto alba*) are found across the whole of the Forest area but numbers are low. Require large areas of open rough grassland or young woodland to hunt for small mammal prey, and require farm buildings or tree cavities to roost and nest in.

Target areas: general but especially farmland, rough grassland and young plantations.

*Actions:*

- retention of areas of rough grassland, field margins and roadside verges as hunting territory.
- retention of old trees and old farm buildings for roosting and nesting
- erection of owl boxes where no suitable mature trees exist and particularly adjacent to known territories.

For construction of barn owls boxes see The Hawk and Owl Trust website, [www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)

**Water Voles** (*arvicola terrestris*) are in serious decline nationally with an estimated 89% decline this century (with 30% of this decline occurring between 1990 and 2003). They are found mainly along the banks of slow moving watercourses, such as ditches, streams and rivers, but they do need a varied supply of vegetation to provide food and cover. Burrows are dug into the banks, often in quite elaborate networks with underwater entrances.

Target areas: any river valley but particularly Trent Valley and Hooborough Brook.

*Actions:*

- creating buffer strips to prevent nutrient runoff into rivers
- providing cover in the form of riverside trees
- protection of banks to prevent erosion and denuding of vegetation
- control of mink
- creating reedbeds, which serve as refuges for water voles against mink.

Protection of habitat is crucial for water voles. Bank cover and intact banks for burrows are very important, as are undisturbed sites.

Contacts as for the otter.