

## AONB SPECIES ACTION PLAN

### ***Purpose***

To present members with the second of the 5 National Landscape Species Action Plans, for the Hedgehog, under the Colchester Declaration.

### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC endorses the Hedgehog Species Action Plan and welcomes the on-going work on the preparation of the remaining Species Action Plans.

### ***Key Issues***

- The Colchester Declaration – a ‘declaration for nature’ was produced by the National Association for AONBS (NAAONB) and supported by all the AONB partnerships in 2019.
- Five species, or assemblage of species, were chosen as representative of the Wye Valley National Landscape Special Qualities.
- The second Species Action Plan, for the Hedgehog, as a locally iconic species and relating to boundary habitat diversity & connectivity, has been published and is appended below.
- The National Landscape team is working on the production of the remaining Species Action Plans and an accompanying Wye Valley National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan.

### ***Reasons***

In July 2019 the Colchester Declaration was produced by the NAAONB and supported by AONB partnerships. The Declaration demonstrated the readiness of AONB partnerships to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change. The ambition was pledged for every AONB to prepare a Nature Recovery Plan and deliver Species Action Plans to reverse the decline of threatened species identified on the IUCN Red List, see: <https://national-landscapes.org.uk/the-colchester-declaration>.

The AONB Unit worked with local wildlife and conservation experts to choose 5 species, or assemblage of species, that: are representative of the AONB Special Qualities [SQ], as identified in the AONB Management Plan, and; will benefit from positive landscape scale management. The species chosen are: Noble Chafer beetle in relation to orchard habitats & Veteran Trees [SQ27, SQ18]; Hedgehog as a locally iconic species [SQ1, SQ4, SQ5, SQ26]; Water Crowfoot as an indicator for river water quality [SQ3, SQ10]; Woodland butterfly assemblage with special interest in the Wood White and Pearl Bordered Fritillary in relation to woodlands [SQ2], and Bumblebee assemblage with particular focus on Shrill Carder, Brown-banded Carder, and Red-shanked Carder in relation to grassland sites [SQ4].

## ***Implications***

### **Hedgehog – Boundary habitat & connectivity and community engagement**

The second of the 5 Wye Valley National Landscape Species Action Plans, has been produced and is appended below.

Progress to date on delivering the Hedgehog Species Action Plan (SAP), led by Celyn Davies, Nature Recovery Officer, and Lucinda James, Community Links Officer, includes the following:-

- A partnership has been developed with local hedgehog champion Dylan Allman, and continued support for his work.
- PTES shared their records with the AONB Unit, establishing baseline data for hedgehog distribution across the National Landscape.
- Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) funding for Nature Recovery in Wales has been secured, which has funded the restoration of two hedgerows in the 24/25 financial year, with further hedgehog work to be initiated for the delivery of this SAP.
- The National Landscape Species Action Plan for the hedgehog has now been written and sent out to project partners for feedback.

Work is also progressing on the other Species Actions Plans.

### **Bumblebee Assemblage - Grassland species**

- A partnership has been developed with Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Bees for Development.
- The National Landscape Species Action Plan for bumblebees has been started, but needs further development and action in 2024.

### **Water Crowfoot – River species**

- This Species Action Plan has not yet been started but will be developed over the 24/25 FY. The revitalizing of water crowfoot beds in the river is also a consideration in the Wyescapes Landscape Recovery project, as well as being part of the overall concern for river restoration concern of the Wye Catchment Partnership.

### **Woodland butterfly assemblage – Woodland species**

- A partnership has been established with Butterfly Conservation and work is underway for the development of this Species Action Plan.

## ***Background***

In 2019 the annual National AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference took place at the University of Essex, Colchester. The conference concluded with The Colchester Declaration – a Declaration for Nature. This was developed through a series of pre-conference discussion fora and workshop sessions during the conference. The Declaration is the pledge for nature of the AONB network: to protect what remains and restore what has been lost.