

GENERAL / POLICY

- **Nature after Minerals** – high quality wildlife habitat can be created on mineral sites. A new section of the website www.afterminerals.com is dedicated to making the most of opportunities for wildlife through mineral planning (p399).
- **National Trust** – did you know that the NT has a 3yr.training programme called *Careership* for aspiring countryside wardens and gardeners? There is also a full time volunteer scheme offering opportunity for practical experience (p422).
- **Britain's Best Wildlife – TheTop 40 Sights to See.** TV presenter Mike Dilger's unique countdown, including boxing hares, leaping dolphins and the mating chorus of natterjack toads (p453). ISBN 978-0-00-727591-5. £16.99 hbk.
- **Value of biodiversity** – an interim report presented to the 9th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Biodiversity sets out the case for a comprehensive assessment of the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services. It also considers methods for valuing biodiversity and green accounting (p450). See http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/index_en.htm
- *'Through a naturalist's eyes'* - John Burton writes emotionally about his boat trip to St Kilda this summer (p392).
- **Environmental Stewardship** – over 100 changes to ELS options and 80 to HLS options are proposed, also simplification of the Farm Environment Plan (p448). See www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/es/es-report.pdf
- **Defra's Land-Use Project**, to be led partly by Natural England, will look at challenges facing the countryside over the next 50 years (p449). See www.foresight.gov.uk/index.asp
- **The Gallagher report into the indirect impact of biofuels** concludes that current policies will result in a net increase in greenhouse emissions and a loss of biodiversity. It urges a rethink of biofuel policy (p448) See <http://www.dft.gov.uk/rfa/reportsandpublications/reviewoftheindirecteffectsofbiofuels/executivesummary.cfm>

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Pitt Review - learning lessons from the 2007 floods** - recommends a presumption against building in 'high risk' areas and that the Environment Agency's powers to challenge development should be strengthened. Also that householders and businesses should no longer have the right to lay impermeable surfaces in gardens (p445-6). See www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview.aspx
- **Floods and Water Bill**– following the Pitt review and the publication of its water strategy *'Future Water'*, the Government will publish a draft Floods and Water Bill for consultation in 2009. It will give the Environment Agency a new role to oversee all types of flood risk management, with Local Authorities given the lead for surface water flooding (p446). See www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/floodsandwaterbill.htm
- **The limits of climate-space modelling** – a reply to a letter in a previous issue calls for more studies to be overlaid with habitat availability and dispersal data. 'For the vast majority of species we do not have sufficient understanding of their habitat requirements or dispersal capacity to incorporate them in a meaningful way'(C.Walmsley & R.Smithers, p454).
- **Climate change and health** – the Dept. of Health's report *Health effects of Climate Change in the UK 2008* warns of the likelihood of a severe heatwave within the next decade, increased flood risk and air pollution, problems with water supply and increased skin cancer (p4450). See www.hpa.org.uk

SPECIES

- **Bird Atlas 2007-11** – fieldwork for the second winter starts on 1st November. Why not consider taking on a tetrad or sending in Roving Records? (p430). Paper forms available from the BTO: www.bto.org/birdatlas/index.htm
- *'Bears in Britain'* –A.Fleming raves about tardigrades (literally *slow walkers*), often called *water bears* or *moss piglets*. Weakly segmented with unjointed legs, these minute animals are placed in a phylum of their own (p393-8).
- **Best practice for invertebrates** – *'Managing aggregate sites for invertebrates'* provides recommendations for maximising the potential for wildlife of site restoration schemes and for allowing space within active sites (p399). See www.buglife.org.uk or for hard copy email: info@buglife.org.uk
- **Moles** – fascinating facts by M.Gorman in the PTES magazine *Mammals UK, Winter 2007*. What a pity moles are high on the gamekeepers' target list when they work so hard – tunnelling uses up to 4000 times as much energy as walking! They have high levels of haemoglobin with a high affinity for oxygen and twice as much blood as other mammals of the same size. Concentrations of oxygen underground are only 6% compared with 21% on the surface (p425).
- **Declining migrant birds** include the sand and house martin and the spotted flycatcher (p429).
- **Exceptionally long-lived birds** include a 41yr old razorbill and 31yr old curlew! Ringing and Migration BTO (p429).
- **Badgers** will not be culled in England any more and increased funding will be made available to enable the development of a vaccine against Bovine TB! This long-awaited statement was made by Environment Secretary Hillary Benn in July, following data showing that annual culling would prevent only 12 out of an expected 130 TB outbreaks across 125km² over 6 years (447). See the Badger Trust website for details: www.badgertrust.org.uk
- **A Sustainable Future for Europe, the European Plant Conservation Strategy (2008-2014)** was issued by Planta Europa in June, outlining targets and actions aligned with those of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. Additional issues are the sustainable use of plant resources and plant conservation in production lands, i.e. forestry and agriculture(p447).. See www.plantaeuropa.org

HABITATS

- *'Gardening with Wildlife in Mind'* is now available on-line from www.naturalengland.org.uk/wildlifegardening(p450)
- **Killer manure** – allotment holders have discovered that manure containing residues of the herbicides *amonopyralid* and *clopyralid* used against dock, nettle and thistle, are having a pernicious effect on tomatoes and other food crops. Any manure that may contain these residues should not be used on species-rich grassland or on land that is to be enhanced or sown with wildflower seed (p449). For more information, see entries on Wikipedia.