

GENERAL / POLICY

- **Ecological credit crunch** – a solution put forward by **The New Economics Foundation** is outlined in its '*Green Deal*' proposition which aims to transform the current model of economic growth. It argues for a radical new approach to taxation, support for renewable energy generation and the pricing of carbon (p139). According to the World Wide Fund for Nature's annually updated *Living Planet Report*, we are using 30% more resources than the earth can replenish each year. See www.neweconomics.org/gen/greennewdealneededforuk210708.aspx
- **Invasive biofuels** – the **Global Invasive Species Programme** warns that many of the crops currently being considered for biofuel production have the potential to become invasive if introduced to new areas (p141). '*Biofuel Crops and Non Native Species: Mitigating the risks of invasion*' can be downloaded from www.gisp.org
- **Biodiversity Indicators** – Defra has published updated information for 51 biodiversity indicators for England, announcing an upward trend. When looked at closely, however, the news is not good. The condition of SSSIs has improved but data indicate continuing downward trends for species requiring high-quality habitats, including woodland and farmland birds and woodland butterflies. The latest data on farmland birds show that, between 2005 and 2007, numbers fell to their lowest recorded level; the indicator is currently 52% of that measured in 1966 (p141). A breakdown of the species in the index shows that the long-term decrease is driven mainly by the decline of specialist species like the corn bunting, turtle dove, yellow wagtail and grey partridge. According to the Vice-president of the NFU, it is too simplistic to blame farming for the decline while the 'real' issues are being ignored; these include climate change, urban development and increased traffic (p141).
- **Stewardship Update** – minor changes to England's Entry and Higher Level schemes have been introduced (p142). See www.defra.gov.uk. The *High Level Group on Set-Aside* has recommended that farmers should, under cross-compliance rules, keep a percentage of their land in some kind of environmental management; it is expected that any changes will be introduced in the 2010 cropping year (p142).
- '*Halting Biodiversity Loss*' – this **House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report**, published in October 2008, concludes that the Government will fail to meet its 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss, although the target may have been unrealistic. Despite progress on improving the condition of SSSIs there is continuing loss in the wider countryside and the authors call for new targets for 2020 (p144). See www.publications.parliament.uk
- **Water** – Environment Agency figures show that more than 80% of waterbodies in England and Wales fail to reach good ecological status (p144). See the Environment Agency website (water quality) for details. The **National Trust report 'From Source to Sea: Working with Water'** calls for a new approach to sustainable water resources that works with natural processes and on a catchment scale (p144) See www.nationaltrust.org
- **Eco-towns** – only one of the 12 proposed sites – Rackheath near Norwich – is a serious runner', with two other sites – northwest Bicester and Rushcliffe - on the short list (p143). See <http://ecotownsvoursav.direct.gov.uk>

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **British Wildlife & Climate Change: The Future** – the third of a series of articles, in which John Hopkins considers what effect a rise in temperature of 2° - 3.5° and an increase in winter rainfall and heavy downpours may have on wildlife (p99-106)
- **Climate Change Act 2008** – commits the UK to achieving 80% cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions, including those from aviation and shipping, by 2050. Together with the new **Department for Energy and Climate Change**, an independent **Committee for Climate Change** has been established to take forward the provisions of the Act (p140).

SPECIES

- **The Moths Count Project** - led by Butterfly Conservation and funded mainly by HLF, it began in 2006 to raise awareness of moths, encourage moth recording and set up a long-term *National Moth Recording Scheme*. Training opportunities for all levels of expertise have already been provided and in 2009 a booklet on the identification of difficult species will be produced, also provisional distribution maps for all macro-moths (p.88-96). Anyone can help to record moths so see: www.mothscount.org
- **An unusual visitor to the bird table!** - a water shrew, in Lancashire, feeding on peanuts in the evening (p112).
- **Management of Natterer's Bats populations** – research suggests that clear-felling of large blocks of native broad-leaved woodland should be avoided and conifers not used for reforestation (p116)
- **Fungus experts are rare beasts!** - one of the few, Peter Roberts, is taking over the column in *Wildlife Reports* (p138,140).
- **Bird Atlas** - many areas still need help with Timed Tetrad Visits or Roving Records (p121). See www.birdatlas.net
- **British bees in crisis** – one third of Britain's honeybee colonies have been lost over the last year. If the trend continues, it will have a devastating impact on the pollination of some agricultural crops (p141).
- **Swifts** – the UK population fell by 41% between 1994 and 2007. One of the major threats is building renovation but nesting opportunities can be created in new buildings (p141). See www.swift-conservation.org
- **Butterfly survival** – Butterfly Conservation has identified the top 20 *British Butterfly Survival Zones* which include the Cotswolds and the Midland Brownfields (p142). See www.butterfly-conservation.org
- **Citrus Longhorn Beetle** – records are wanted for this invader of trees and shrubs (p142). See www.defra.gov.uk/plant/pestnote/2006/citlong.pdf

HABITATS

- **Field margins** – 24000ha have been created by farmers in England, providing numerous wildlife benefits but much more can be achieved if a range of margin types is created using both seed mixes and weed control. A relaxation of the eligibility rules for Single Farm Payments to allow the creation of some areas of scrub is hoped for (p97). See www.farmwildlife.info