

GENERAL / POLICY

- **CAP review** – a mid-term health check, marking the beginning of moves for further major CAP reform, due in 2013, came a step nearer in May following the publication of the European Commission's proposals on the subject. The EC is also recommending the abolition of compulsory set – **aside** (p371). See below and www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/prop_en.pdf
- **Set-aside review** – Sir Don Curry has published an interim report for Defra, summarising the opposing views of proponents and objectors to the scrapping of set-aside (p375). See www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/deliverygroup/index.htm
- **Changing behaviour** - '*Weathercocks and signposts- the environmental movement at a crossroads*' – the Worldwide Fund for Nature critically reassesses current approaches to motivating environmentally friendly behaviour (p371). See www.wwf.org.uk/strategiesforchange
- **Eco-towns – where's the ecology?** – the Government's vision to see 10 eco-towns built across England came a step closer in April when 15 locations were listed, including Middle Quinton in Warwickshire. The final decision will be made by a panel of 14, none of whom has a background in wildlife conservation (p374). See www.communities.gov.uk/news/housing/810823
- **The John Ray Trust** is awarding bursaries up to £500 to support research into aspects of natural history, particularly in Britain (p375). Applications for May 2009 by 16th March 2009. Telephone 01376 325266.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Biofuels** – '*A future for UK grassland in energy production*' explores the potential for using traditional pasture grass and grassland as a source of biofuel (p371). See www.iger.bbsrc.ac.uk/Publications/Innovations/In2007/Ch3.pdf
- **A future for England's natural environment?** – in its '*Statement of the Natural Environment*' report issued in May, Natural England calls for a new approach to managing the natural environment to enable the country's wildlife and landscapes to survive climate change and development pressures (p371). See www.naturalengland.org.uk/sonel/
- **A sister publication**, '*Manifesto for the Natural Environment*', asks the Government to fund landscape scale conservation projects (p371). See www.naturalengland.org.uk/about/docs/manifesto.pdf
- **NE funding package** – '*Countdown 2010*' offers £5m of grants for habitat restoration and species projects over the next 3 years (p372).

SPECIES

- **Bird Atlas 2007-11** – after a slow start to field work in April, 154 000 roving records have now been received online and over 6 000 tetrads covered (p350). Maps of coverage, species richness and sample species maps can be viewed at www.birdatlas.net
- **Wild bird trends** – the latest data for 1994-2006 show that, in some parts of the UK, bird populations continue to decline rapidly. *Grey partridge*, *turtle dove* and *corn bunting* populations have crashed by more than half but overall indicators for farmland birds levelled off around 2000 since reaching an all-time low in the early to mid 1990s (p372). '*Populations of wild birds in England*' can be seen at www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/biostrat/indicators/pdf/200805hla.pdf
- **Polecats** are now widely re-established across the Midlands (p348) – a report by the Vincent Wildlife Trust can be seen at www.vwt.org.uk
- **Turtle dove and Common Quail** - one of the hazards faced on migration is about to disappear. The European Court of Justice has issued interim measures ordering Malta not to open Spring hunting for these species (p350). See www.birdlife.org/news
- **European Protected Species – possible implications of changes to UK law.** Article by M.Willing (p366-9) discusses the dilemmas for research workers and others requiring possession of EPS specimens, in the light of the updated UK Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.)(Amendment) Regulations 2007. See www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/pdf/uksi_20071843_en.pdf
- **British Mosquitoes.** Article by JM Medlock & KR Snow (p338-346) discusses this maligned group of insects and provides ID keys.
- **The BTO is 75 years old.** Article by P Lack, C Showell & J Toomer (p323-9) asks for out-of-the-ordinary archives, e.g. Christmas card catalogues, survey instructions, membership recruitment leaflets. Email: archives@bto.org

HABITATS

- **National Vegetation Classification** - The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has improved the on-line information (p375). See www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4259
- '*Restoration of wood pasture on former agricultural land: the importance of safe sites and time gaps between grazing of tree seedlings*' – finding a good balance between the conservation of present grassland biodiversity and the spontaneous regeneration of woody species (p322). Van Uytvanck, J., Maes, D., Vandenhaute, D. & Hoffman, M. (2008) *Biological Conservation* 141(1):78-88.
- '*A Year in the Life of an English Meadow*' (2007) by A Garnett, P Devlin & C Smith. £20 hbk. Not a scientific book but an invaluable tool for owners and managers of wildflower meadows by the owners of a Somerset meadow (p377).