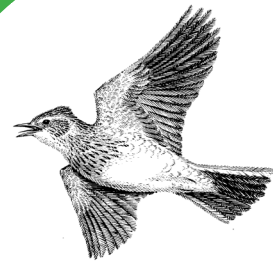


The newsletter
for owners and
managers of
Local Wildlife
Sites

Skylark



Issue 27 Autumn 2018

Local Wildlife Sites are selected locally, but recognised nationally for their great wildlife value. They are the best places for wildlife outside legally protected areas, and range from streams and meadows to woodlands and hedgerows.

Fungi – why is it so important?

Much attention is given to plants and animals when managing habitats for nature conservation, however the role that fungus plays in our ecosystems is a vital one and should not be overlooked. In this article we examine the ecology of fungi and what you can do to protect and enhance your site for these fascinating organisms.

Biologically speaking, the kingdom of fungi is separate from both plants and animals. Found to be more closely related to animals, these organisms were some of the first to evolve on the planet and underpin all life on earth. Fungi are frequently overlooked, however at this time of year we often see the fruiting body of the organism growing above ground, usually in that classic mushroom or toadstool shape. Despite this fungi come in a huge variety of different, often beautiful forms and can be discovered growing in a wide range of habitats including woodland and grassland. The key ways that fungi function within the ecosystem are:

The **recyclers**, together with bacteria, are responsible for slowly breaking down dead wood, dung, leaf litter and even animal carcasses. Without fungi, these recycling activities would be seriously reduced and we would effectively be lost under piles of organic waste.

The **mycorrhizae**, are of vital importance for the growth of most plants through the development of so called mycorrhizal associations, a process whereby nutrients are exchanged back and forth between the fungus and plant forming a symbiotic partnership.

The **parasites**, are fungi that obtain their nutrients directly from other living organisms, including both plants and animals. Almost all plants, including trees host a species of parasitic fungi, usually only acting to weaken the organism but occasionally causing death to the host plant.

The best fungal sites are considered to be agriculturally unimproved grasslands, wood pasture and ancient woodlands. A Local Wildlife Site managed sympathetically for plants and animals is also likely to be beneficial for fungi, however it could still be improved by following the simple advice overleaf:



Sulphur tuft
Hypholoma fasciculare



Amethyst deceiver
Laccaria amethystina

Information & Advice

If you have any queries about your sites, please don't hesitate to contact us:
- Claire Install, Senior Conservation Officer: 0116 248 7367 or cinstall@lrwt.org.uk
- Uta Hamzaoui, Conservation Officer: 0116 248 7364 or uhamzaoui@lrwt.org.uk
- Ben Devine, Conservation Officer: 0116 248 7369 or bdevine@lrwt.org.uk

Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, 9 Soar Lane, Leicester, LE3 5DE.
Website: www.lrwt.org.uk



Leicestershire
& Rutland
Wildlife Trust

Site management tips for fungi

Best practice:

- Maintain the continuity of established sites, including retaining veteran trees.
- Encourage regular fungal recording on your land to better understand which fungi it contains.
- Find out which species are of conservation importance on your land and what you need to do to look after them.
- If you have a management plan for your site, include any actions needed to help fungi.
- Keep managing sites that are good for fungi in the same way that you have always managed them.

Remember:

- To avoid the use of fungicides as they may accidentally kill useful or rare species.
- Many species of fungi including Waxcaps are killed by the application of artificial fertilisers.
- To keep as much dead wood as possible on your land as this is a very important resource for fungi.
- To consider the implications for fungi before you change any habitat management practices and to seek further advice from the Wildlife Trust if required.

Adapted from:

Fungus Conservation Forum: Managing your land with fungus in mind

A Wilder Britain - A critical moment to reverse the decline of nature



The Wildlife Trusts are calling for a wilder, better Britain. We know from research across the globe that a healthy, wildlife-rich natural world is essential for our wellbeing and prosperity. But wildlife has been getting less common for decades. Wild places are scarcer, smaller and more isolated.

Nature needs to recover – for the sake of wild plants and animals, and for everything it brings us: better health, climate control, flood management, enjoyment, employment and more. Along with other Wildlife Trusts, we are asking that the new Environmental Bill promised by Theresa May is ambitious in ensuring that our wildlife can recover. The Wildlife Trusts have produced a booklet which sets out how we can bring about nature's much needed recovery.

To see a copy of this or find out how you can help us in our quest for wildlife legislation that works for wildlife and people, please contact Claire Install today.

What is special about Local Wildlife Sites?

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are sites of substantive nature conservation value and although they do not have any statutory status, many are equal in quality to statutory Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). They range from secluded ancient woodlands and quiet churchyards, to bustling flower-rich roadsides and vibrant wetlands. Identified as being some of the most important, distinctive and threatened habitats in the region, these wild places are hugely important places for people and wildlife.

LWS support the vast majority of our local wildlife and rely on sympathetic owners to maintain and safeguard their quality. Please contact us if you would like any advice regarding the management of your LWS and continue to contribute to conserving wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland.

If you know of someone who might be interested in receiving a copy of this newsletter, or if you would prefer not to receive it, please let us know via email to - bdevine@lrwt.org.uk or in writing to Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, 9 Soar Lane, Leicester, LE3 5DE.