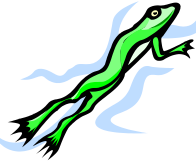


Leicestershire Amphibian and Reptile Network



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GCN Items

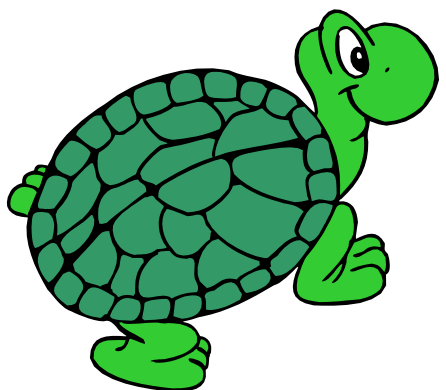
Newt fencing has gone up at the Lounge Opencast site near Ashby de la Zouch, probable scene of the construction of a railway-based distribution centre. This involves moving a great crested newt population, possibly the biggest in Leicestershire – thousands have been reported. The newts live in vertical-sided tanks, and are being moved to near-by newly created ponds.

Great crested newts are also likely to be impacted by new development at Berryhill, Donington-le-Heath. There are concerns that archaeological investigations in advance of the development might affect GCN terrestrial habitat. GCNs are also a concern at developments at Iveshead Road, Shepshed.

At Glen Gorse golf course, Oadby, where GCNs inhabit several ponds, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust is giving advice to the golf club regarding appropriate management of the habitat. The advice relates to care that needs to be taken when using herbicides near the ponds.

Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook

As a companion volume to the Reptile Handbook mentioned in the last LARN newsletter, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) has produced a comprehensive new publication, the “Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook”. It has sections on pond creation, pond restoration, and other pond species; terrestrial habitat is not forgotten, as well as the place of ponds in the landscape. One section is devoted to the special requirements of the natterjack toad – unfortunately not found in Leicestershire, the nearest being a small introduced population on Cannock Chase, Staffordshire and others which were reintroduced on the Lincolnshire coast – this publication considers the issue of introductions/translocations. The handbook is available from the ARC website: www.arc-trust.org



Terrapins

In the latest issue of Leicestershire and Rutland Recorder, Lorraine Ellison reports, and presents a photograph of, a red-eared terrapin at Cossington Meadows in May 2011. Thousands of red-eared terrapins were imported from the USA in the 1970s and 1980s, spurred by the popularity of the Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles, and many were released into the wild when they out-grew their tanks. Terrapins have also been recorded at Groby Pool, Ashby Canal and Eye Brook Reservoir – do let me know of any other sightings.

Going Going

Cuts are happening everywhere, not least at Leicestershire County Council, where the Environmental Resources Centre based at Holly Hayes, Birstall, is to be subject to “savings”. This involves the loss of one member of the already small team, and the closure of the Holly Hayes building, with the team moving to a new base at County Hall.

It is the outreach work, encouraging and coordinating wildlife recording, which is likely to suffer: the very useful publication “Leicestershire and Rutland Recorder” is likely to be one casualty, as is the annual meeting of county recorders, as well as popular surveys such as Snakes Alive and Spawn Spot. It is possible that the Wildlife Trust might pick up some of the coordination work, but this is not really a satisfactory situation - the County Council should be involved in documenting and monitoring the environment for which it has responsibility.

County Recorders

County recorders have been identified to coordinate recording of various plant and animal groups. Just in case you are not aware, I am Leicestershire and Rutland (Vice-county 55) county recorder for reptiles and amphibians (as well as fish) so I would be pleased to receive any records of these species. Contact details at the end of this newsletter.

HWM

The 2012 Herpetofauna Workers Meeting is being held on 28 and 29 January at the Telford International Centre, Shropshire. A provisional programme and booking can be found on the ARC website: www.arc-trust.org

Silent Summer

“Silent Summer: the State of Wildlife in Britain and Ireland”, published by Cambridge University Press in 2010, gives very useful overviews of the status of reptiles and amphibians at the present time. Covering pressures, the current status of various plant and animal groups, and the likely future changes, an impressive team of experts has been brought together under the editorship of Norman Maclean.

2012 is Coming

At the Olympic Park in London, 4000 smooth newts, 100 toads and 300 common lizards have been relocated to make way for the sporting facilities!



If you have any news for the next edition of this newsletter, do let me know.

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