



The B-Lines Update

Issue 8

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Welcome to our latest update

B-Lines Update

Since the last update B-Lines has continued to enhance and increase pollinator habitat within the network. We have also been supporting partners to develop new projects across the network. Our aim to complete mapping across the UK has been helped thanks to support from Natural England, and we have now mapped both Norfolk and Suffolk. B-Lines have also started to be mapped in Scotland with work around the John Muir pollinator way. This newsletter aims to let you know of the work that B-Lines have achieved over the last few months and our plans for the future. We also hope to encourage you to get involved in developing B-Lines in your local areas. If you have any queries about getting involved or staying up to date with our work contact: Info@buglife.org.uk



White tailed bumblebee, *Bombus lucorum* - thyme 2
(c) Roger Key

Norfolk and Suffolk B-Lines

Last year we worked with a number of stakeholders and conservation organisations to successfully map the B-Lines routes for Norfolk and Suffolk. Shortly after completing the mapping we received a great boost. The enthusiasm at the workshop encouraged Natural England to provide additional funding for Buglife to investigate ways of getting the B-Lines delivery off the ground by developing partnerships and resources.

We are currently talking to key partners in Norfolk and Suffolk including local Wildlife Trusts, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Groups, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Broads National Park to see how we can work together to produce more pollinator habitat, so that we can start delivering real change on the ground in 2016.

John Muir Pollinator Way

The John Muir Pollinator Way is an inspirational landscape-scale project which aims to map Scotland's first B-Line and reconnect fragmented habitats across the central belt of Scotland from Dunbar, the birthplace of John Muir, to Helensburgh stretching 134 miles coast to coast.

B-Lines mapping will identify where wild flower foraging, as well as nesting habitats for pollinators and other wildlife can be created and enhanced along the John Muir Way. Through this project, we will engage with local communities to identify 10 initial stretches where wildflower meadow creation will provide the biggest benefits to their community.

The project has started with boosting the biodiversity in Bo'ness, Falkirk, at a brownfield site that is locally known as Bridgeness Ship Breakers, as well as a wildflower area in Grangepans. Through this project, the brownfield site and meadow area will act as an green corridor that will link important habitat and allow the movement and mixing of wildlife throughout Bo'ness. Both of these sites have been sown with diverse plants & wildflower seeds including annuals, perennials and grasses. With the coming spring both areas will be in full flower, and we are then planning to plant wildflower plugs with the help of the local school children and others in the local community.

If you're interested in volunteering on the Bridgeness Biodiversity project please contact Suzanne Burgess on suzanne.burgess@buglife.org.uk or 01786 447504.

West of England B-Lines

The first 18 months of the West of England B-Lines project has proven to be a great success! Between April 2014 and September 2015 the project has contributed towards the restoration and creation of over 110 hectares of wildflower rich habitat across the B-Lines network;

providing important areas for our pollinating insects to forage, nest, shelter and over-winter. Avon Wildlife Trust's Grassland Restoration Team volunteers have put in an amazing 533 days of their time, undertaking a wide range of conservation tasks including scrub management, grassland cutting using traditional techniques such as scything, seed collecting and sowing, and plug planting. Project Officers have also been



busy delivering workshops for local community groups and landowners, engaging with farmers to advise on habitat management, carrying out site surveys, delivering talks and engaging with members of the public at events. Buglife and Avon Wildlife Trust would like to thank project funders, partners, supporters, landowners, communities and all those who have engaged in the project so far.

Helping to monitor Bees - by taking BeeWalks along the B-Lines

A big part of conserving bees is knowing which species occur where and how many of them there are. A lack of data on species means we risk only spotting problems once species are in real trouble. To provide more data the bumblebee abundance-monitoring scheme has been established by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Volunteers, or 'BeeWalkers' walk a monthly transect from March to October, identifying each bumblebee they see (where possible) and counting numbers of each species they see in each habitat they walk through. Data is then submitted online via the website,

www.beewalk.org.uk. As it is really important to ensure records are accurate we run training courses in bumblebee ID for BeeWalkers across the country. There are currently more than 330 transects with volunteers feeding data into the BeeWalk scheme, from Falmouth

in the south to Caithness in the north. More than 38,000 individual bees were recorded in 2015, across 22 bumblebee species. All data collected will contribute to long-term monitoring of bumblebee populations in response to changes in land-use and climate change, and ultimately will help inform how we manage the countryside.

We are working to encourage people living in or close to the B-Lines to help monitor bumblebee populations by getting involved in BeeWalks. This will help increase monitoring of the impact of habitat works within the B-Lines and also increase the overall number of transects across the country. We welcome anyone who wants to get involved – details are on the website at www.beewalk.org.uk. Ultimately, bumblebee conservation depends of having the data to spot declines, pick out increases, and examines the influence of conservation measures – and the only way these data will exist is if volunteers collect them. The more the merrier!

Dr. Richard Comont

Bumblebee Conservation Trust



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Making a B-Line for the North East

Our work in the North East has continued to carry out a range of habitat works across Sunderland and South Tyneside. Over the summer months we have worked alongside Durham Wildlife Trust and Wild Ground to harvest seed from Local Wildlife Sites and using this to increase the area of wildflower rich grassland by sowing this seed on adjacent areas of land. In addition we have been over-seeding other areas of local parkland; developing new areas of wildflower-rich grassland which will provide valuable stepping stones of habitat between existing habitats. The project has also started on its second winter of scrub clearance work on Local Wildlife Sites, which will help protect and restore large areas of locally important magnesian limestone and neutral grasslands.

The project has continued to work with schools and over the coming months we will be working alongside students and teachers to develop

pollinator habitats across the school grounds. Other schools across the area will be provided with help and guidance to make their own school ground pollinator friendly. All this work has encouraged others to get involved and we are currently working with both Sunderland Council and the local housing association – Gentoo to identify further sites across the City where we can create wildflower-rich grasslands to benefit both insect pollinators and also the people who live there



New Farm Advice to help develop the B-Lines

Farmers and landowners in Kent and Sussex will soon be offered advice on how to manage land more beneficially for insect pollinators. Our newly appointed farm advisor will be providing advice on how to implement the new Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package being offered under Countryside Stewardship. We will aim to give B-Lines in Kent and Sussex a boost by targeting advice within the B-Lines network; however we will also be providing advice across the wider landscape. This work is being carried out in partnership with Farmcare, Ecotricity and Natural England.

Can you help?

We are keen to work with, and develop new partnerships to deliver stretches of the B-Lines network, both in our countryside and urban environments. If you have any contacts who might be interested, please spread the word about B-Lines and ask them to get in touch with paul.evans@buglife.org.uk .

Thank you. To stay up to date with progress keep visiting the Buglife website www.buglife.org.uk .