



23 April 2008

Dear Steering Group Member

### **Biodiversity South West – new joint-chairs of partnership**

We would like to introduce ourselves as the new joint-chairs of Biodiversity South West (BioSW).

Basil Greenwood (Natural England) and Lyn Jenkins (Environment Agency) have done an excellent job steering the work of the partnership over the last 10 years we would like to extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation for their dedication and hard work. Lyn has recently moved posts within the EA and with Natural England taking on line management of the BioSW Coordinator, the Steering Group felt that an independent co-chair would be appropriate.

In the past 10 years the Partnership has driven and supported biodiversity action and we should be proud of our achievements. Most notable have been the success and national recognition of the South West Nature Map, high quality data collection and reporting, our partnership with SITA Trust, the excellent links made between local, regional, and national BAP groups, and our work with wider stakeholders including local authorities and marine competent authorities .

Looking forward we face the challenges of helping the region's biodiversity adapt to climate change and cope with increasing agricultural and development pressure, preparing to report on the 2010 biodiversity targets and getting to grips with revised and significantly longer BAP habitat and species lists. Keeping biodiversity on policy and decision makers agendas and making sure that the ecosystem services provided by our environment are properly valued will be key to meeting these challenges.

To do this we need to maintain a strong Partnership led by an active and supportive Steering Group. Without input from us all, we will not be able to ensure we get the most out of our sometimes limited resources and our rich natural heritage will not get the protection and enhancement it deserves.

To this end we would like to make sure that you have every opportunity to attend the Steering Group meetings for the coming year and have set dates in advance as follows:

Thursday 8 May  
Thursday 18 September  
Tuesday 30 September (Full Partnership Meeting)  
Wednesday 3 December

The South West supports a high proportion of some of the UK's rarest and most endangered habitats and species. Nearly a tenth of the region's land area is designated as nationally and internationally important wildlife sites. It has the highest ratio of coastline to land area of any region making the maritime environment particularly significant.

The South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership aims to promote and enable the delivery of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan through regional and local biodiversity action in line with the England Biodiversity Strategy. The South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership includes Association of Local Government Ecologists, Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Government Office for the South West, Local BAPs, Local Record Centres, National Trust, RSPB, South West Protected Landscapes Forum, South West Water, South West Wildlife Trusts, Wessex Water and Woodland Trust

Meetings will be held at either the NE or EA Offices in Exeter and will be from 10.30 am - 3.30pm. We encourage Sector Group Chairs to attend Steering Group meetings whenever possible. The management group (see attached structure) will meet from 10.30 to 11.30 to cover budget and other admin matters. The steering group will meet from 11.30 to discuss Sector Group updates, BAP project progress and communications and advocacy activities.

The first task for the Steering Group will be to agree the priorities and work program for 2008/09 and this will be the focus of the next meeting. Please let Naomi know if you will be attending.

If you have any queries please do get in touch with Naomi or ourselves and we look forward to working with you to deliver the aims and objectives of BioSW.

Yours sincerely

**Emma-Rose Herrera and Simon Brenman**