

Green Shoots Cheshire newsletter, Spring 2009

Spring 2009

Welcome to the first Green Shoots Cheshire Newsletter of 2009. In this edition I'll be telling you more about our new mink control initiative, the results of the grey partridge spring count, our exciting launch of Green Shoots at Westminster and also how I have helped three Green Shoots members benefit from nearly £10,000 worth of habitat improvements on their shoots through a successful funding bid to the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

The Green Shoots project is only possible with your help. Without the valuable contributions from our members we wouldn't have a project at all. Through your support we can gain the results we need to ensure our sport and its contribution to wildlife conservation are recognised by politicians, the media and the general public. If you're interested in any of the work going on and would like to find out more please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Ben Gregory

Cheshire Biodiversity Project Officer
T: 01244 573 024
M: 07825 989 749

Mobberley Mink Control

After a very successful start to the mink control project on the River Gowy thanks to support from BASC Green Shoots members, Richard Gardner, Northwest Lowlands Water vole officer and I decided to concentrate our efforts on another area of the county that we thought would benefit from a targeted mink control programme.

The first stage of the project was to send out a letter to all the members in Mobberley to ask for their support. The response was excellent, with over half of the members in Mobberley coming forward to assist with the project. Richard and I then set about making the mink rafts, which use a clay pad to detect any signs of mink, before setting a live capture trap that is monitored on a daily basis with the help of Green Shoots members. I'm extremely pleased to say after deploying six rafts, with a seventh planned very soon, we have already caught and dispatched eight mink.



Cheshire bats get new homes

With spring fast approaching it was time to get the ten bat boxes installed on the shoot near Tarporley which received funding from the Sandstone Ridge Econet Partnership to carry out habitat improvement work. The boxes provide bats in the area with artificial places to roost and I'm very hopeful that due to the location of the boxes in good woodland bordering onto the canal (which provides the bats with an important source of insects in the warmer months) the boxes will be inhabited soon.

The boxes I put up were a mixture of simple wooden ones and also two different types of woodcrete box (made using a mixture of concrete and wood shavings). During the summer I will undertake a bat survey to find out if any of the boxes have been used and I'll keep you posted on the results.



If you have any questions about the work being done by the Green Shoots project in Cheshire, or you think you may be able to help, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Email: ben.gregory@basc.org.uk Phone: 01244 573 024
Mobile: 07825 989749

BASC 
The British Association for Shooting & Conservation



ALSF: Money well spent

Work has now been completed on the three shoots in Cheshire that benefitted from nearly £10,000 of funding through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). The fund was set up with the aim of reducing the environmental impacts of the extraction of aggregates (sand, gravel and crushed rock) and to deliver benefits to areas subject to these impacts.

After a successful joint bid by me, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and Cheshire County Council we received a total of £46,765 to spend on sites across the county. I'd already identified three shoots which would benefit from some habitat improvement work and

wasted no time in getting a local company, Caddis Ltd from Knutsford, to start the work.

The March deadline was tight, considering we were only granted the funding in December, however I'm pleased to report that the money has been spent, the work is now completed and I'm extremely pleased with the results. The majority of the money was spent on new woodland creation (3.9 acres in total) as well as a small amount of hedgerow planting on one of the shoots. The work will not only provide valuable cover for the shoots but will also benefit a wide variety of important species.

Grey Partridge Spring 2009 results

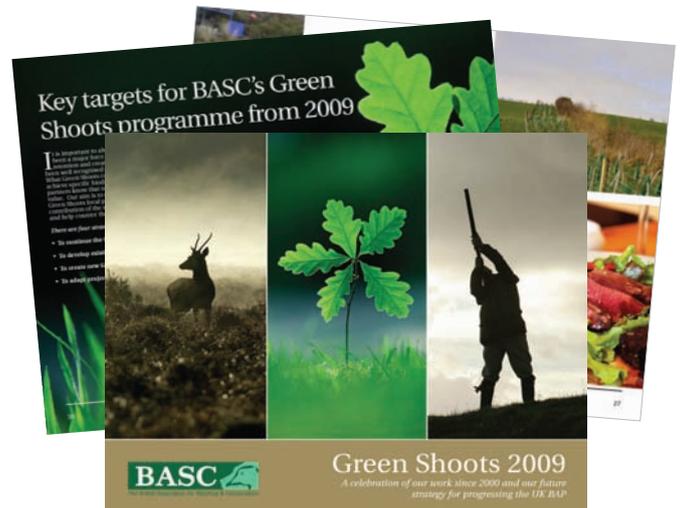
After what proved to be a disappointing start to the counts this year with not one grey being counted on the first shoot, I was eager to prove that there are still populations of wild grey partridge in Cheshire. The second count was more successful with a pair being spotted on the shoot and the third count was even better with three pairs of wild greys spotted. Even though the counts usually involve an early morning start, seeing wild greys is always a joy, and I've got to admit one of the best parts of the job.

I'm very keen to find more shoots in the county that have wild grey partridge to include in the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's counting scheme. If you would like to get involved please don't hesitate to get in touch – I want to find many more sites with wild grey partridge.



Green Shoots at Westminster

Green Shoots in Cheshire is one of several local projects BASC runs with partners under the Green Shoots banner. It all started in 2000 when BASC launched *Green Shoots* its biodiversity action plan for shooting and has achieved much acclaim within the conservation world. To celebrate our achievements through Green Shoots I have been involved in producing a booklet which highlights what we've been doing in Cheshire as well as setting new targets for our work in the future. The booklet was launched at the House of Lords on 12 May. We are grateful to Lord Wade of Chorlton for sponsoring the event and delighted that Graham Wynne, chief executive of the RSPB, spoke in support of it. The booklet, as well as a series of videos we produced to explain the project, will be on the BASC website from the last week in May. Please log on and have a look.



Free training events spring/ summer 2009

Who says you don't get something for nothing these days? The Habitats and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme is running a series of training events which are FREE to those living in the county of Cheshire. The training opportunities are designed for professionals, rural land managers, members of local communities and volunteers to learn about techniques in conservation and restoration of natural, cultural and traditional landscape features along the Sandstone Ridge in Cheshire. Courses include:

Practical drystone walling

18, 19 and 20 June 2009 - Venue to be confirmed

Charcoal making and green woodworking

1 & 2 August 2009

Pond creation and management

24th & 25th September 2009

Contact me for more details on any of the courses, after going on one of the courses myself last year I can certainly recommend them.