

Welcome to the first Cheshire Green Shoots newsletter. The newsletter is to tell you what's happened over the past three months and what I will be working on over the next three months. I'm hoping by doing this, any members interested in helping out with any of the current or planned projects will get in touch. Green Shoots is about helping you provide for wildlife on your shoot and ensuring that this contribution towards conservation targets is recognised by politicians, the media and the general public. I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter.



What's happened to all our Dormice?

The dormouse was once found in woodlands all over England and Wales, but in recent decades it has disappeared from several northern counties and is now only common in the south-west. The last known indigenous dormouse record from Cheshire is in 1910 near Nantwich. The reason for this decline is mainly the loss of the woodlands in which they lived. Loss of hedgerows, which dormice can use as corridors to travel between woods, has also contributed, as have changes in woodland management methods. Over the past 3 months I have been working with Sue Tatman from Cheshire Wildlife Trust checking and erecting dormouse nest tubes on Green Shoots members land. Although the project had a possible lead in 2007 we haven't had any sightings as yet but we're still convinced they're out there somewhere. *So if you've got fantastic Dormouse woodland with all the right ingredients of good ground level vegetation such as brambles and honeysuckle and a good helping of hazel then it'd be great to hear from you.*



Hedging our bets



Each year we provide 2,000 hedgerow plants, which have been kindly donated to us by Cheshire Landscape Trust, to Green Shoots members. This year five members were given a good mixture of hedgerow whips with a few trees thrown in for good measure. The first batch of plants was planted in late February. *If you're interested in using some of our donated hedgerow plants next year don't hesitate to contact me.*

Mink control on the Gowy

Following on from the success of my colleagues in North Wales and on the Somerset Levels I will be setting up a program of mink control on the River Gowy in order to try and encourage water voles back to the River. I will be doing this by using rafts which act as a monitoring device and trapping platform to detect and remove mink. *If anyone is interested in helping out with this project in any way or if you have access to the Gowy please contact me.*

Counting Grey's

Starting in mid April there will be a few very early starts in the Gregory household. Its Grey partridge counting time and I will be working with four Green Shoots members carrying out counts on land totalling just over 1000 acres. The UK population of

Grey partridge declined by over 50% between 1969-1990 to a current estimated 150,000 pairs. Using the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's counting packs we'll be counting wild Grey's in order to keep a track on how they're doing.

Pond matters

The chances are, most of you reading this will have a pond on your shoot. For those that don't have one already, maybe you're thinking of creating one? For the sportsmen, ponds can provide excellent shooting and fishing opportunities, for the farmer, ponds can be used for stock watering, and for conservation, ponds are essential to the survival of large numbers of plants



and animals. So it's a win, win, win situation. With the survey season upon us I am hoping to get out and about looking for sites to carry out some pond work. I will be looking for interesting creatures including the Lesser silver water beetle, which has been found breeding in Cheshire (the only known site outside the Somerset Levels). *As part of this project I would also be interested in hearing from anyone who is considering creating a pond this year as we can provide some advice on the best way to go about it.*

Calling all Elm's

Have you got elms on your shoot? If so you might like to know you could be playing host to one of our counties most striking butterfly species, the White letter hairstreak. Due to the dreaded Dutch elm disease many of our elms in the UK have been decimated. This in turn has led to a decline in the White letter hairstreak which uses the elm for feeding and laying its eggs. Working in conjunction with Butterfly Conservation I'm hoping to find some new sites where the White letter resides. *If you have elm on your shoot and you think you can help, please get in touch.*



White letter hairstreak courtesy of Butterfly Conservation

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 then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Email: ben.gregory@basc.org.uk

Phone: 01244 573 024

Mobile: 07825 989749