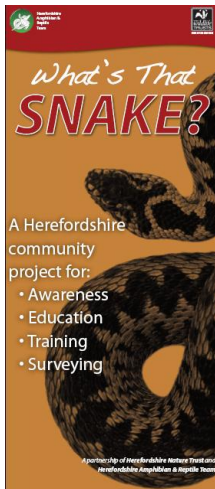




Herefordshire
Amphibian &
Reptile
Team

What's That Snake?

Project Newsletter No 4 June 2010
Richard King, HART Chairman



We are well into the second year of the project and in the midst of the surveying season. Volunteers are out for the second year in the Malvern Hills, Haugh Wood (north) and Coppet Hill. Newly trained volunteers have started this year on Bircher Common, Stapleton, Wigmore and Wapley Hill, Shobdon, Moccas Park, Great and Little Doward, Kenchester and Haugh Wood (south). With the success so far, Your Heritage has granted us an extension to the project to end December 2010, to allow extra training and school visits, and more comprehensive work to be done putting together proposals for a reptile conservation project. This is all within the original budget.

Training and Surveys: Nigel Hand, WTS project officer, ran a further two training courses at Richard's Castle, one at Holme Lacy College for the students, and one for Natural England at the Moccas National Nature Reserve - 35 people attended. He has also done an awareness day at Clifford Church with Caring for God's Acre when slow worms and common toad were found. Again we hope surveyors will make at least 4 visits to their chosen site and return some good records and photos of adders, grass snakes, common

lizards and slow-worm. Records are vital in determining where healthy populations exist and where urgent work is needed to prevent decline of threatened populations.

Volunteer Thank-you Evenings: We ran an enjoyable volunteer evening in the Malvern Hills area in January, but we were unable to find a suitable venue (not too expensive!) for the Haugh Wood/Coppet Hill groups. We will therefore save the funds for a bigger project end celebration in October - please put 6 October in your diaries - an evening event at The Barrels pub, St Owen Street, Hereford. More details nearer the time.

Schools Visits and WildPlay events: 30 school visits have now been made of the 40 planned. We continue to receive high praise for these events on the teacher feedback forms. All the children seemed to be very enthusiastic and interested in the animals. The Teachers' Pack has gone out to nearly 100 schools and there was a formal launch of the pack, reported in the local papers, at Ledbury Primary School in April. The Amphibian and Reptile Trust (the national body to whom we are loosely affiliated) has also shown great interest in it and the possibilities of promoting it nationally.

The WildPlay group at the Nature Trust has held 15 events with the WTS team and these have all been thoroughly enjoyed. This is well in excess of the number originally planned!

Conferences, Shows and Fairs:

Nigel gave a presentation on the project at the HERP Workers Conference in January, and the HBRTC Recorders and Naturalists' Meeting in February, generating a lot of interest. We are taking the stand to the Waldorf Garden Festival at Hellens, the Bioblitz Event, and the Three Counties Show in mid-June, and to the Herefordshire Fair at Hampton Court in August. The stand usually generates continuous interest all day, especially the live animals.

Nigel has also lead several guided walks in search of reptiles, and at the FWAG walk at Bircher the issues of habitat management were particularly addressed.

More volunteers are still needed! If you would like to help at a show or Fair, pass on any records of snake or lizard sightings, book a talk for a school or group, or for more information about this project then please contact Nigel Hand, Project Officer, at The Hereford Nature Trust Tel:01432 356872.

Websites: www.herefordhart.org/projects_wts.html

www.herefordshirewt.org/wts.html

This project has been generously funded by grants from Malvern Hills AONB, Wye Valley AONB and Heritage Lottery Fund

