

Back to Orange Project 2008-2010

JENNY JOY

This Grow With Wyre three year project has now been successfully completed, thanks to funding from SITA Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund, and other partners.

In brief the following outcomes have been achieved.

- Large increase (from 10 to at least 52 sightings) in the numbers of Wood White at Hurst Coppice in 2010 (which was the first project site worked on) with the first signs of Wood White starting to disperse elsewhere in the forest (4 male records elsewhere in 2010).
- Hugely improved numbers of Pearl-bordered Fritillary on the Forestry Commission Longdon Pipeline in 2010 with all the scallops created as a result of project work supporting good habitat and being occupied (increase from 13 in 2009 to 57 in 2010).
- Good evidence that Pearl-bordered-fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Dingy Skipper and Drab Looper have rapidly moved into project work areas close by but not adjacent to sites where they are already established. Pearl-bordered Fritillary have already colonised two areas of Longdon Wood created by project management work (with peak counts of 15 and 17 in 2010) and there is now the anticipation that further project work areas (those done towards the end of the project) will be colonised by this butterfly next year.
- Grazing introduced into one site within the forest (the Great Bog) with the habitat already improving after one year and good numbers of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary subsequently recorded here in 2010 (increase from 9 in 2008 to 14 in 2010).
- Vastly improved knowledge of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary overall in the forest both in terms of its history and its current distribution (particularly in 2008 and 2009). Two areas were found to be particularly good for this butterfly.
- The setting up and monitoring of a PAWS (Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites) Lepidoptera Research Programme on ten sites. The eight plots where conifers were removed have already hugely improved in both their plant species and Lepidoptera diversity in just 2 years. One good example of this is the Silver-washed Fritillary which in 2010 was already present in 6 out of the 8 managed plots (compared to only 1 in 2008). Pearl-bordered Fritillary were also recorded on 4 out of the 8 opened plots with one plot clearly already supporting a colony of this butterfly. Other wildlife to benefit from the management includes Tree Pipits and a range of other sun-loving insects and saproxylic invertebrates.
- The first stage of improving linkage across the forest with project work particularly helping to get this underway in the Hurst Coppice area.
- The success of management work being highlighted by the repeated vegetation monitoring carried out in 2010 which showed increases in plant diversity, increasing abundance of spotted orchids (on two sites) and the positive effects of liming.
- As a result of the butterfly training courses (run by Mike Williams and Rosemary Winnall) as part of the Grow With Wyre element of the Back to Orange Project there were over 25 volunteer monitoring visits to various sites in the Wyre Forest in 2010. This is in addition to the 3 Wyre Forest butterfly transects 2 of which have been fully covered by weekly walks during 2010. A chat site has also been set up which now has 29 members.



Plot 4 post conifer clearance, Longdon, Pearl-bordered Fritillary feeding on Bugle

Rosemary Winnall