Welcome to the second edition of the Biodiversity Information Service (BIS) Recorders newsletter. Thank you to all the contributors who have provided such an excellent wide range of articles, from fungi to fairy shrimp, and I am sure they will be of great interest to many of you. I am also pleased to say that we are now being asked if we can put articles into the BIS newsletter, and that it is proving to be a successful way of communicating with the local recording community.

We are going to put this newsletter on our website as it is now a large file for email, especially if you do not have a Broadband connection. We will still post to those for whom BIS does not have email addresses, but would be grateful if any of you could provide email addresses for the future, so BIS can notify you of future newsletters posted on the website, and help BIS to save on postage.

Please could you send contributions for the next Spring Newsletter by March 15th 2007.

Janet Imlach - Editor

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Biodiversity Information Service Recorders Forum 2007

BIS will be holding the fourth Recorders Forum, sponsored by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Powys County Council, on Saturday, 2nd December 2006 at Rhayader Leisure Centre.

We will be giving you updates from BIS and the LBAPs but would be particularly pleased if local recorders would be able to update us all on interesting records over the last year or on the activities of local recording groups and projects. It could be a very short update or presentation. Please contact Janet at BIS.

We would also like to focus this year on how BIS and the other LRCs in Wales are/or could support the local biological recording community eg Web sites and organising access to sites for recording. There will be plenty of discussion time, as we at BIS have lots of questions to ask you on whether you feel we are on the right track and how we can best proceed.

As usual a buffet lunch will be provided and invitations will be sent out in early November to known recorders and any others who have expressed an interest. If you would like to receive an invitation and have not heard by 24th November please contact BIS (details on page 13). We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Janet Imlach – BIS

Yellow-winged Darter (*Sympetrum flaveolum*) recorded in Radnorshire (VC43)

Ian Standen took the above photograph of the migrant Yellow-winged Darter on 19th July 06. Ian has also reported numerous sightings of Ruddy Darters (*S. sanguineum*) in the Vice-county again.

Bob Dennison
BBNP Invertebrate Recording Weekend

The Second Invertebrate Recorders event was held at Danywenallt study centre in June. Recording started almost immediately as after dinner on the first night, the small group headed up to the top of the reservoir to collect from the wet margins and streams of the adjacent farmland.

Thursday the group made for the west of the park and the upland limestone area of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu National Nature Reserve. The weather held out and the group covered a lot of ground, with members concentrating on the wet springs and flushes.

Fridays visit to Llwyn-on reservoir started with bright sunshine and an area of fen and water to explore. Branching out from invertebrates, several bird records were collected and also some botanical work. Friday afternoon as the skies clouded over, a visit was made to Traeth Mawr SSSI on Mynydd Illtyd common where yet more invertebrates were sieved from the relative safety of their pools.

Friday night, a keen few made a long trip down to Pontneddfechan to join a moth trapping evening, looking for the Waved Carpet moth (above). While fighting hordes of midges the Waved Carpet was discovered along with more than 50 other species of moth and a couple of hungry bats. This was the first record for the National Park in 80 years Saturday was spent around the wetland margins of Llangorse Lake. A brief search of a veteran tree picked up a Cardinal beetle, before the best find of the event, the Reed beetle (*Donacia bicolora* - below), a species never before recorded from the area and now the only known site anywhere in Wales.

A few spent the final morning just down from Talybont reservoir collecting more water beetles. In all more than 500 records were generated and include the couple of very notable finds mentioned above. Both Janet and Gareth would like to thank the recorders whose input and enthusiasm made it an enjoyable week for everyone.

However, this year the event was poorly attended. After last year’s event, many recorders suggested June as a better time – but then found June too busy to attend the event! Many also found it difficult to attend during the week. BBNPA wholeheartedly want to see this event succeed and so must ensure that we get as many Recorders attending as we can. Therefore, we want to see if there is a better way of arranging the event to ensure a better turn out and a better service to the Recorders. This will be a point of discussion for the Recorders Forum in December. A possible alternative is running a series of shorter, weekend events over the summer, focussing on different sites or species, depending on the availability of expert recorders.

*Gareth Ellis*

BBNP LBAP Officer
Fairy Shrimp (*Chirocephalus diaphanus*)

The RDB2 fairy shrimp *Chirocephalus diaphanus* is associated with temporary pools, ranging from cart ruts to weedy ponds, which usually receive regular disturbance from livestock or vehicles. Requiring an absence of predators such as fish, ostracods and various insect larvae, fairy shrimps survive periods of drought as eggs although adults can be found in all months of the year. Most recent records in the UK are confined to Devon, Cornwall, the New Forest and Salisbury Plain, with isolated records from Cambridgeshire. Welsh records are few. It was first recorded from Pen-y-clawdd in Monmouthshire (1978) and it has been found in a small number of seasonal pools in the Vale of Glamorgan. There are records (1993-1996) from Litton Hill in Radnorshire, but a survey of 50 temporary pools in the vice-county failed to locate additional populations (Anon, 1999).

However, fairy shrimps were discovered in two pools on Hergest Ridge in August 2005, one in Herefordshire and one in Radnorshire (V. Bradley, T. Fairfield & W. Watson, pers. comm.), and they have also been reported from Radnor Forest although details are not available (David Heaver, pers. comm.).

The most recent discovery has been near Aberedw Rocks, again in Radnorshire, in August 2006 (V & C Bradley), not shown on map.

The adults can easily be seen with the naked eye swimming gracefully upside down in shallow pools. They can grow to 35mm and look pinkish and delicate. They have flattened thoracic appendages (11 pairs) and stalked eyes, and the males have large modified second antennae with which they grasp the female during mating. They survive desiccation and extreme temperatures (including frosts) as eggs, hatching into nauplius larvae within 3 days of the pool filling. They can grow to sexual maturity within 1-2 weeks, and in the absence of predators, can live for up to 3 months.

Fairy shrimp (above) can be surveyed by looking for adults or collection and incubation of mud. There is much debate regarding the mud method. Whilst it can prove the presence of fairy shrimp in a pond, it cannot always prove absence. Target surveying for adults may be far more productive. The onset of the rain in August mirrored conditions in 2005 when fairy shrimp were found on Hergest Ridge following a long period of drought. Waiting for about two weeks after the onset of the rains, we set off in search adults. Twenty-five ponds and ruts were surveyed and we were rewarded by another record of adults. Mud samples were taken from all ponds and are incubating, but so far there have been no further hatches. (contd page 5)
The ponds are now rapidly drying out (left) - we must now wait for the rains again! Any sightings please let either Dr Mike Howe (CCW, Bangor) or myself know. If you are interested in getting involved in a fairy shrimp survey, contact Julian Jones, Radnorshire Wildlife Trust. [Please remember that a CCW licence is required to disturb and collect Fairy Shrimp]

Val Bradley

References

**Butterfly and Mammal Recording in Montgomeryshire (Vice-county 47)**

As reported in the Spring Newsletter, across the UK there is a network of vice-county wildlife recorders covering a range of flora and fauna groups. Often specialists in their field, these individuals provide one point of contact for the verification and submission of wildlife records.

For many a long year Andrew McCleish (mammals) and Simon Spencer (butterflies) have carried out these voluntary roles for Montgomeryshire, largely unappreciated. Earlier this year, I took over both these roles and I would like to thank Andy and Simon for all their hard work over the years.

I have been a bit of a wildlife nut for as long as I can remember and it’s all my mothers’ fault; especially when it comes down to recording! In fact my colleagues at the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust reckon that I have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in recording! For many years now I have been sending records to the Andy’s and Simon’s of this world and it is such an honour to take up the reins myself.

My main focus at the moment is filling in as many gaps as possible and this is particularly so for the mammals. I am very keen to receive records past, present and future of common mammals, as well as the rarer ones. Taking our common mammals for granted is very dangerous; just look at the Water Vole! Water Voles used to be found on every wet patch in the countryside and people saw them all the time. Now Water Voles are at serious risk of extinction and I don't even know if we have any left in Montgomeryshire now.

I am also keen to know more about the bats in Montgomeryshire and if I can find the time (?) and other keen people maybe we can re-start the Montgomeryshire Bat Group or perhaps start a mammal group instead. If you or a friend has a bat roost in their house and would like to know more, I would love to hear from you. Recording forms are available on request for both mammals and butterflies.

Send your mammal & butterfly records to me at: Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Collot House, 20 Severn Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7AD. Tel - 01938 555654 or email tammy@montwt.co.uk.

Tammy Stretton
Discovering Dormice

In 2004 the Brecknock Wildlife Trust signed a management agreement with Forestry Commission Wales to set up and carry out a Dormouse monitoring project in Crychan and Halfway forests. These large forest blocks straddle the Brecknock/Carmarthenshire border so first it was important to check we would not upset our neighbours at the Wildlife Trust South & West Wales. The Forestry Commission had already received the results of a survey, for dormouse-opened hazelnuts, which was carried out by consultants. Based on this information, in Spring 2005, a dormouse box scheme with a total of 200 wooden boxes was established in five separate sites.

In the meantime, the Trust had been busy recruiting and training volunteers who wished to get involved with the project. The three essential factors were enthusiasm, commitment, and a vehicle. The Trust was able to secure funding support from Environment Wales towards the volunteer training programme and Phil Morgan, Brecknock County Mammal recorder and a CCW licensed trainer for dormouse work, was engaged. A series of training sessions were held in order to get the volunteers to the stage of applying for their own CCW dormouse licences.

And results so far…Live dormice have been recorded now in two of the sites. In June 2005, two sleepy female dormice were found together in a box. More recently, in August this year one female was found in a box at a different site. This is very pleasing news and liaison with FC staff for forest management activity will result. In 2007, there are plans to install some nest tubes to supplement potential dormouse nest sites. Also additional volunteer recruitment and training will be required as volunteers have dropped out for various reasons.

Surrounded by swathes of conifer plantation of varying ages, clearfell and wide forest tracks, the 5 monitoring sites do not on first appearances have great potential for dormice, and therefore there is the puzzle of what sort of population exists in Crychan and Halfway forests. It is probably dispersed at a low density because dormouse food sources do not appear abundant and the dormice are probably travelling and foraging widely to locate good feeding areas.

Diane Morgan - Brecknockshire Wildlife Trust Manager
Spider Collecting in Brecknockshire and Adjacent Vice Counties

Spider recording has been going on in south Wales for decades but it is only in the last few years that most vice counties have received active attention. As Glamorgan has long been recognised as having “honeypot” sites (i.e. important and productive), particularly on the coast, and has academic institutions nearby, it had a sizeable list even ten years ago. Indeed it benefited greatly in 1901 from the work of A.R.Jackson, one of the pioneers of arachnology in the UK. But other counties have not fared so well as is shown in the table below. I have compiled it from various sources starting with Mike Kilner’s countrywide analysis produced in the Spider Recorders’ Newsletter 28 of July 1997. Mike then produced a checklist with Cobwebs 4 (newsletter of the South Wales Arachnid Group) produced in February 2005. I have been actively recording in Brecknock, Monmouth and Glamorgan, and have extracted data from my records, but the task is incomplete so I give best estimates as at Feb 2006. Mike is area organiser of the SRS (or spider recorder) for all these vice counties except Brecknock which he passed on to me three years ago as I live on the edge of it and have a vested interest.

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<td>322</td>
<td>364</td>
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<td>290</td>
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The scarcity of records on one hand is due to the very few recorders, except in Glamorgan, and then on the other only one or two recorders have been very active over a short time, which is why the totals are so disparate and yet have increased so fast. There have been a small number of notable collecting efforts:

- Mike Kilner moved back into Monmouthshire about a decade ago and concentrated there;
- The Welsh Peatland Invertebrate Survey (Holmes et al. 1991) provided many records from wetlands all over which were incorporated into the lists a few years later;
- The Dyfed Invertebrate Group were active in that region, particularly Ian Morgan who was the AO for Carmarthen, which explains the big boost in numbers for that county;
- The British Arachnological Society / Spider Recording Scheme had a meeting and produced a Mid Wales Survey report in 1995 which benefitted Radnor and Brecknock particularly;
- The South Wales Arachnid Group was formed three years ago and its members have contributed new records, particularly from Glamorgan;
- Finally I took up spiders about three years ago and have concentrated on Brecknock and, to a lesser extent, Glamorgan and Monmouth.

We are still finding spiders new to the counties and even new to Wales, which need to be written up for the record - when there is time! Then there are new species being added to the British list or existing species are split into two, some of which occur in Wales. So where are the upper limits? From an article by Peter Harvey (SRS national organiser) in the SRS Newsletter 39 of March 2001, I glean the best worked counties that have the following totals: Dorset 471, Hampshire 465, Sussex 429, Essex 423, Surrey 423. (contd page8)
I guess Glamorgan might reach 400; but Brecknock, with no warm coast, is unlikely to reach 350. Who knows?

How does one find new county species? Essentially, go out and look. Then, know your species and their habits, use the winter to read up on them, then target a wide range of appropriate habitats at the right time of the year. Indeed the winter can be profitably, if somewhat cold, used to sieve upland moss and Molinia clumps of which Wales has abundance. Churchyards in the Vale of Usk above Abergavenny have proved quite productive of species more usually found in lowland England, perhaps emulating the abundance of Mistletoe found in this atypical part of Wales.

John Harper

Neutral Grasslands Project

Neutral grasslands find their best expression as hay meadows on fertile, neutral soils. They feature plants like knapweed, red clover, birdsfoot trefoil and tufted vetch and many grasses such as crested dog’s-tail, sweet vernal grass and meadow foxtail. When they are not being managed as hay meadows, many of these plants will ‘tick over’ in the sward, coming back when grazing is relaxed. A small silver lining to the disaster of Foot and Mouth disease five years ago, was that meadows were able to bloom again in the absence of grazing, and attracted admiring looks and comments that it reminded people of their childhood!

No habitat has declined faster than hay meadows. On generally good soils, they owe their existence to agriculture, have been part of agricultural history for centuries, but when farming fashions changed, they simply vanished.

Many individuals and organisations would like these ‘old-fashioned’ hay meadows to become fashionable again. That is the aim of a new project led by the organisation Flora Locale, which has pioneered hay meadow seed harvesting techniques.

As Project Officer, I will be spreading the word about the importance of these grasslands, and then helping farmers to create new ones. An article I wrote in the Western Mail produced a string of phone calls from farmers and landowners. One or two were interested in the grants that might be available, but most were moved to pick up the phone by their affection for this habitat. One lady only spotted my article as she was about to light her range - it was probably the pictures that caught her attention; I have high hopes that the result will be a marvellous donor site, and a chance to help her manage a suite of meadows which have been let go.

The Countryside Council for Wales is providing funding and information about the best remaining neutral grasslands, collected in past surveys. To succeed, the project must attract support from all those working in different ways for this aesthetically attractive, useful and culturally significant habitat. In particular, we need to find farmers who would be willing to provide seed or green hay from their meadows, and others who would be interested in creating new ones.

One of my first tasks has been to draw up a list of possible seed donor sites. If you would like to help, and have any information about grassland sites in your area, which may be suitable—or unsuitable—, I would be pleased to send you the list so that you can comment on the sites which have been included, and tell me about any omissions. If you would like to help, please contact me on 01248 422223, jamrobertson@gmail.com.

James Robertson
Flora Locale Neutral Grasslands Project Officer
Waxcaps

Waxcaps have been described as the orchids of the world of fungi. They are often startling in colour from reds, oranges and yellows to whites and browns. They can smell of honey or less pleasantly rather nitrous. They are usually found in grasslands although they are found less commonly in woods. They are one of the groups of grassland fungi that are now recognised as excellent indicators of ancient unfertilised grassland. Other grassland types are the Entolomas (pink spored gill fungi), the Clavarioids (coral fungi) and Geoglossums or Earth tongues. They can all be found in a range of grassland types from dunes to uplands, from lowlands to gardens. Indeed some of the best species like *Hygrocybe calyptriformis* (see photo below) are more often found in gardens than other grassland types.

*Hygrocybe calyptriformis* is actually a Biodiversity Action Plan species so if you find this species in particular in your garden, please e-mail me at david.mitchell@nifg.org.uk. These species are sensitive to the application of artificial fertilisers, especially those containing phosphorus. It may take a considerable time for fertilised sites to be rehabilitated even if managed positively for nature conservation arguably making grassland fungi better indicators of ancient unfertilised grasslands than higher plants.

The great unknown however is just what these species are actually doing in the soil. They seem linked with mosses, but, if that is right, how? A recent paper (Griffith, G.W., Easton, G.L. & Jones, A.W. (2002). Ecology and Diversity of Waxcap (*Hygrocybe* spp.) Fungi. Bot.J.Scotl. 54(1), 7-22) points to some possible answers based on stable isotope analysis. Stable isotopes of Carbon (13C) and Nitrogen (13C) occur naturally and work looking at the patterns of 13C and 13C enrichment in ectomycorrhizal and saprophytic fungi have shown quite different enrichment patterns.

When Waxcaps have been looked at, preliminary work by Griffith *et al.*, has shown them to have very different patterns from both ectomycorrhizal and saprophytic fungi. They are more depleted in 13C and more enriched in 13N. Clavarioids and Geoglossaceae are even more different, but Entolomas are more typical of saprophytic fungi. This could mean that *Hygrocybe* spp., Clavarioids and Geoglossaceae could be deep humic decayers rather than normal surface litter decayers. The fact that Entolomas are more typical saprophytes supports the idea that sites good for Waxcaps are not necessarily good for Entolomas. (contd page 10)
**Assessing site quality from fungal data**

There has been a lot of interest in assessing sites for mycological importance based on a variety of scoring systems. These can be based on a simple count of numbers of waxcaps or systems that include species from the other groups of interest. CCW funded a survey of Wales between 2003-05 and it showed that Wales was one of the richest areas of Europe for grassland fungi with some excellent sites being identified with over 25 species of Waxcap. This however does not mean that the hunt is over. Good sites can be tiny pockets of grassland that are very hard to find. They can be gardens, estate lawns or churchyards as well as semi-natural grassland in the uplands or coastal sites. This is where we would appreciate any help from those interested in natural history. There are some species that are particularly easy to identify like *H. calyptriformis*, but we are looking for sites with a lot of different species so if you see any sites with different types of these bright colourful species, please contact me at the address below.

David Mitchel  
david.mitchel@nifg.org.uk

**Waxcap Resources**

- British Waxcaps Website: [http://www.aber.ac.uk/waxcap/index.shtml](http://www.aber.ac.uk/waxcap/index.shtml)
- Images of Waxcaps: [http://www.nifg.org.uk/species/photos/photo41.htm](http://www.nifg.org.uk/species/photos/photo41.htm) (and following pages)
- Maps of Welsh Grassland Fungi: [http://www.nifg.org.uk/waleswaxcaps/species/atlas.htm](http://www.nifg.org.uk/waleswaxcaps/species/atlas.htm). Note this is a temporary address as it will be linked into the British Waxcap website in the future.

**Flora of Powys Seedbank**

I am setting up a seed bank of the flora of Powys and have already collected over 70 native plant species. I really do feel that we need to preserve the genetic diversity of our plants and that means collecting from each of our counties in Wales. However I am now looking for native seeds collected in Powys from the following plants:

- Ragged Robin
- Field Pansy
- Cornflower
- Yellow Rattle
- Wood Sage
- Nettle-leaved Bellflower
- Spreading Bellflower
- White Campion
- Common Mallow
- Wild Carrot
- Large-flowered Hemp-nettle
- Purple Loosestrife
- Giant Bellflower
- Water

Elisabeth Harris (RWT member) oceanlis2000@yahoo.co.uk
Brecon Beacons National Park Wildlife Sites Project

The Wildlife Sites system is a recognised and well-established designation with many planning authorities. The UK’s county-based Wildlife Trusts have been key activists in promoting the system and renewed effort is just beginning in the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP). A Brecknock Wildlife Trust project from 1999-2001 identified about 40 potential sites in Brecknock. More recently, Gwent Wildlife Trust has identified important grassland Wildlife Sites (WS) in Blaenau-Gwent and Monmouthshire.

The new project is being carried out by Brecknock Wildlife Trust on behalf of BBNP, with assistance from other Wildlife Trusts in the National Park. It is funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. A steering group panel with representatives from conservation and farming backgrounds will assess the quality of potential sites against a robust set of criteria. The Wildlife Sites Project aims to identify WS with the landowner’s permission, to highlight their importance and encourage sympathetic management and entry into environmental grant schemes.

Quick guide to Wildlife Sites

Also known as Sites Important for Nature Conservation (SINCs) or Second Tier Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), these are sites of high wildlife conservation value but they do not have any statutory designation. They are recognised in the BBNP Unitary Development Plan and so receive protection through planning guidance.

Why do we need them and how many do we need to maintain UK habitats and species?

If statutory sites were islands in a sea of unsuitable habitat our wildlife would not survive, but in theory, with an additional network of Wildlife Sites this ‘minimum resource’ will be sufficient to sustain wildlife populations. As such this combined resource should be regarded as essential and irreplaceable so long as we use appropriate selection criteria to exclude lower quality sites that would demean the rest. We hope, eventually that the WS system will select all sites that reach the agreed criteria. For the majority of species we do not know enough about them to say what population level is sustainable, let alone calculate the area of habitat needed. But I hope that in the future, recording and monitoring of species and sites will let us know whether the system works.

How is this going to happen in Brecon Beacons National Park

This current 18-month project, which commenced in August 2006, is funded only to identify Wildlife Sites in the Park area. There will be just one survey season so I would like to hear from any recorders who can help me. I expect to use an extended Phase 1 Habitat survey method and this will be a steep learning curve for me as I am not an expert botanist. I am more of a generalist; my recent job history includes bird surveys, reptile translocation and rhododendron mapping. Depending on time constraints I would like to do more in depth vegetation or other species surveys on certain sites. Therefore I would welcome anyone who can help with surveys. I could also arrange field meetings on certain sites. Please feel free to recommend sites, which hold priority species or habitats, as the Phase 1 habitat maps I have are quite limited. The facilities at BIS are proving a great help for gathering information about sites quickly and easily so please keep the records coming in! The function of BIS is hugely beneficial to this project.

Stephanie Coates, Brecon Beacons Wildlife Sites Project,
Brecknock Wildlife Trust, Lion House, Bethel Square, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7AY,
Phone: 01874 625708, scoates@brecknockwt.cix.co.uk
Encouraging Wildlife Recording on Tir Gofal Farms

Most Tir Gofal farmers are very sympathetic to the wildlife on their farms and would not only wish to know more about what was on their farms but would take steps to preserve what was interesting if they knew about it and knew how to protect it.

Wildlife recorders are always keen to find new places to visit where wildlife is abundant. They particularly like places where little or no recording has taken place in the past so they can find some undiscovered gem. They also like places where it is easy to get permission to visit and they feel welcome. Farmers are also very familiar with their land and usually know the best places on the farm to visit so the recorders know they will get some direction and maybe a lift in the Landover to the best spots.

The Tir Gofal Farmers Association wishes to bring wildlife recorders and Tir Gofal Farms together. As you will no doubt know there are now Local Record Centres that cover the whole of Wales that collect records from local recorders and put them into a computer database. We are therefore encouraging our members and all Tir Gofal Farms to contact their Local Record Centre and register the fact that they are a Tir Gofal Farm and that they would encourage recording on their farm. The farm name, a map reference, brief directions and contact phone number and name are all that is required. Farmers could express an interest in birdwatchers or butterfly experts etc but they have been warned that they won’t always necessarily be any prepared to come. They are also reminded that recorders are normally amateurs who do their recording in their own time and at their own expense so they will need to be tempted to put their farm on the top of the list. The example given was ‘an offer to switch on a moth trap at dusk may well tempt the local moth recorder who can then come out in the morning to look at the catch’.

We would expect recorders to provide their findings both to the Local Record Centre and to the Tir Gofal Farm. This is very important. A photocopy of the list of species should be supplied at least. Tir Gofal Officers will also appreciate the information either direct from the farm, or the recorder or via the LRC database which could take some time.

Ultimately if we are really going to protect the rare and declining wildlife in Wales we need to know where it is and we need to agree specific management prescriptions with the farmer to protect it. Tir Gofal will eventually have to move in this direction. In the meantime that wildlife will often have to rely on the goodwill of landowners.

Any scheme where people are concerned can have problems. We hope that by using the local record centres that the details of TG farms who would welcome recorders only goes to sensible and proper people and that they behave appropriately on farms. If the scheme is a success then it can only promote the need for properly funded Local Record Centres.

The Tir Gofal Farmers Association (www.spanglefish.com/TGFA) aims to represent the views of Tir Gofal Farmers. Its membership is restricted to those farms that receive Tir Gofal agri-environment payments. It was formed after the Assembly decided to cut payment rates to these farms part way through their ten-year agreements. This not surprisingly caused indignation. It is hoping to set up a labelling scheme to promote the marketing of produce from Tir Gofal farms. It also aims to work with conservationists and others to improve the delivery of conservation on farms by improvements to the Tir Gofal scheme.

Simon Spencer
(Chairman Tir Gofal Farmers Association) Email ceri@btinternet.com)
Cwm Sere Stoneflies hit high notes on Stridulation Songs

Cwm Sere is a small Upland Woodland site owned by the National Trust, with the Nant Sere forming its western boundary.

This summer Adrian Plant (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff) ran a joint project with Dr Ingnac Sivec (Slovenia) funded by the British Council, to investigate bioacoustic communication and taxonomy of the genus Perla (stonefly - Plecoptera). Adrian and Dr Sivec visited the site in June and were delighted with the results. Adrian recounts - "The one and only trip was a spectacular success, as we found the stonefly Perla in large numbers and Ingnac was able to achieve all the targets we wanted to hit in just half a day as against the expected 1 week!".

So what are Stridulation Songs? Adrian explained "The stridulation song is in fact the males vibrating a special process on their genitalia which is actioned against stones or driftwood (which they seem to prefer as its such a good resonator). The females are attracted by the vibrations. It's dramatic enough to be heard 10 feet away in a quiet room but often there's little chance of hearing it in the field (usually sub-audible to human ears).

Adrian and Dr Sivec were amazed to get such good recordings of it in the field without the need to take samples back to the laboratory. Dr Sivec is now comparing them with similar species in Europe.

Joe Daggett - Head Warden
The National Trust, Mid & SE Wales

Dates for Diary
Saturday 28th October, 10.30am-4pm: Leaf Miner Workshop with Norman Lowe
@ Pobyly Forest School (Keepers), Brechfa, Carmathenshire. Contact Laurie Jackson, Butterfly Conservation Wales, 10 Calvert Terrace, Swansea, SA1 6AR.
Tel: 0870 7706153 Fax: 0870 7706154. email: ljackson.bcw@btconnect.com

Saturday 28th October, 10.30: Recording and conserving the Invertebrates of Wales, British Entomological & Natural History Society, Regional Meeting @ National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Contact Mike Wilson, Email: mike.wilson@museumwales.ac.uk Tel: 02920 573263

Saturday 2nd December Biodiversity Information Service Recorders Forum @ Rhayader Leisure Centre. By invitation or contact Janet Imlach at BIS for further details. Email: janet@b-i-s.org Tel:01874 610881

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Working in Partnership with:-
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Powys County Council
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
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Radnorshire Wildlife Trust
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