

Conservation Update

Winter 2019

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Welcome to our newly formatted issue of Conservation Update.

The primary purpose of Conservation Update is to communicate conservation and sustainability matters to Ministry of Defence (MOD) Conservation Groups and to reach out to others involved in these disciplines across the MOD estate. Please therefore circulate this document to anyone else you feel may be interested.

This issue's title image is a snowy scene of Salisbury Plain Training Area, taken by Iain Perkins, looking into the demonstration area.

Conservation Group Grant

The Conservation Group Grant consists of £10,000 of Conservation Stewardship Funding which is ring-fenced solely for the use of MOD Conservation Groups. Conservation Group Chairmen can bid for monies to pay for items such as tools, wildflower seed or bird ringing tags to be used by their Conservation Group.

We still have a small amount of money left for the 2018-2019 financial year and would be delighted to receive any last-minute bids. The closing date will be 28th February and an application form can be obtained by emailing DIO-ConservationGroups@mod.gov.uk.

Conservation Group Meetings

We kindly request that Conservation Group Chairs send us an invitation to their Spring Conservation Group meetings as soon as possible.

Whilst we try our best to attend Conservation Group meetings, the Conservation Groups Team is only small (2x FTE members of staff) and has over 100 Conservation Groups across the country. We are sure that you can therefore appreciate that March/April and October/November are a very busy time for us and that often different groups' meetings clash. Our team has now moved to MOD Net and we are therefore keen to use Smarter Ways of Working to better engage with Conservation Groups. We would like to Skype or dial (through spider/conference call phone) into any Conservation Group meetings that we cannot attend in person and are subsequently encouraging Conservation Groups

to provide a Skype facility for Conservation Group meetings. If you can provide this, please do let us know via email.

Sanctuary Magazine Article Calling Notice

Sanctuary is the MOD's annual sustainability publication, which has been showcasing the best conservation projects from across the MOD for over 40 years. The magazine features environmental and heritage conservation, utilities and sustainability across the MOD estate, both at home and overseas.

We hope that you have all now received your copy of Sanctuary 47, 2018. If not, you can read the latest edition online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanctuary>

Our calling notice for articles for Sanctuary 48, 2019 is now live. We are looking for inspiring projects and people from across the MOD estate to feature in this year's Sanctuary Magazine. Articles highlighting the valuable contribution that our people, volunteers, partners and the community make to the estate and the military are particularly encouraged.

Articles must focus on the following areas:

- Nature conservation
- Historical estate & archaeology
- Access & recreation
- Energy, waste and water efficiencies
- Landscape protection & enhancement
- Community engagement
- Wider sustainable development and planning
- Equipment or processes that enhance sustainability

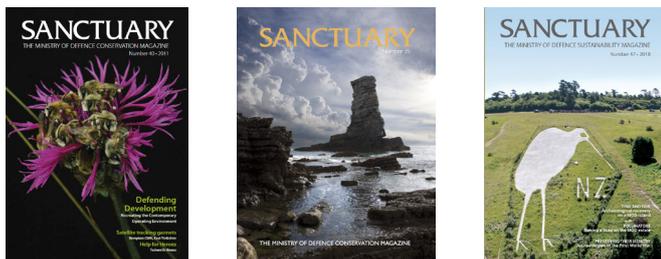
To apply, a short synopsis (max 250 words) should be sent to the Editor via email to DIO-Sanctuary@mod.gov.uk by the strict deadline of Friday 12th April.

Your synopsis should include;

- The aims and objectives of the project or work undertaken
- Who was involved e.g. individuals, teams and organisations
- What was achieved and outcomes for the MOD

Articles will then be chosen by the Editorial Board. If your synopsis is commissioned, we will ask you to write a full article (normally between 1-3 pages). Please note that we can only publish projects that are completed, or will be close to completion, by summer 2019.

Sanctuary Magazine's search for a front cover image



The front cover of Sanctuary magazine is always an excellent talking point. We are currently seeking a cover image for this year's magazine and would be delighted to receive any potential photographs. The image needs to be taken either on the MOD estate or be of MOD equipment/training/personnel. It must relate to conservation or sustainability and needs to be at least 1MB in size. Past front covers have included flora, fauna, landscapes and heritage. Whilst we are unable to pay for the use of images, the photographer would receive excellent publicity, with their work being acknowledged in the magazine which is sent to 4,500 stakeholders across the MOD.

Please send any potential images to DIO-Sanctuary@mod.gov.uk for the attention of the Editor by 12th April 2019.

Sanctuary Awards

Sanctuary Awards have been recognising the best of MOD conservation projects since 1991. The prestigious MOD Sanctuary Awards 2019 Ceremony will be held on 3rd December in Main Building, London, whereby the winners and runners-up will receive their awards from the Defence Minister. The successful entries will also be featured in the Sanctuary Magazine 2019.

We are now seeking applications for the MOD Sanctuary Awards 2019 and nominations are invited for the following categories:

- *Environmental Projects* – wildlife, public access, biodiversity, or improving public awareness of these issues
- *Sustainability Projects* – design and building, climate change resilience, defence communities, and procurement projects
- *Heritage Projects* – archaeology, preservation of historic buildings or monuments and historic landscape assessment
- *Utilities Projects* – resource efficiency, reducing pollution and waste, energy and water consumption, cost reduction activities, projects or technological interventions, and behavioural change
- *Individual Contribution* – for those who, in the consideration

of the judges have made a significant personal contribution within the areas of Environmental, Sustainability, Heritage and Utilities across the Estate and wider MOD

The Nomination Criteria and process is as follows;

1. All entries must be submitted using the entry form (available from DIO-Sanctuary@mod.gov.uk). All entries must be submitted strictly by COP 10th May 2019.
2. The Sanctuary Awards are open to all MOD personnel, Conservation Groups, Industry Partners and other Environmental Stakeholders. However, the entry must relate to land, property or equipment design/use owned or occupied by MOD either in the UK or overseas, or which has a close connection to Defence.
3. If the entry is for a project, it must be well underway or recently completed.
4. To be considered, all entries must have the approval of the Head of Establishment/Commanding Officer or Line Manager.
5. Entries must include all supporting material referenced in the application form.

Myxomatosis in hares

In October 2018 the University of East Anglia initiated a partnership project with Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust to establish the causes of a large increase in hare deaths across the East Anglia region. Following media attention, the University of East Anglia have received reports on large numbers of deaths across southern England, Scotland and Wales.

The university has undertaken post-mortem examinations which indicate that viruses are present similar to myxomatosis in rabbits. Infection spread is rapid meaning we may be about to witness a collapse of UK hare populations.

It is therefore important to monitor the situation across the country. The University is asking anyone who sees a freshly dead hare to record the date, location/ grid reference and to photograph the entire animal, especially around the head and bottom.

The information should be sent to Dr Diana Bell at the University of East Anglia via email d.bell@uea.ac.uk.



Fig. 1 A hare hiding in the long grass

It is important to distinguish the difference between a rabbit and a hare. Figure 1 will help you to do this. Hares are larger than rabbits, with longer hind legs and black-tipped ears which are at least as long as their heads. Since multiple viruses are involved, please be aware that carcasses may show symptoms which you may find distressing, such as bulging eyes and haemorrhage. It is important to wash your hands and equipment afterwards.

Reporting frog and toad spawn

January to May is the time of year to spot frog and toad spawn. We are encouraging you to take part in the PondNet Spawn Survey 2019, which is helping to collect data on the locations of breeding frogs and toads across the country. You can find further information at: <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/pondnet/spawnsurvey2019/>

In addition, as toads are a 'Species of Conservation Concern', Mr Iain Perkins from the Conservation Office is collecting sightings of water bodies that contain toad spawn on the MOD estate. The site name and grid reference should be sent to DIO-ConservationGroups@mod.gov.uk

Figure 2 and 3 demonstrate how you can tell the difference between frog and toad spawn. Frogs spawn in clumps and toads lay their spawn in strings. Frogs tend to start breeding slightly earlier than toads and are less particular with regards to the size of the breeding pond. Toads however favour large water bodies and habitually return to the same site annually, hence the name ancestral ponds.



Fig. 2 Frog spawn in a typical clump formation



Fig. 3 String formation spawn, typical of a toad

A special survey for woodcock

Woodcock is a Red listed bird of Conservation Concern due to a considerable reduction in abundance across Europe. The species is the only wading bird in Britain and Ireland that is adapted to breed in woodland.



A woodcock proving it's a master of disguise © Tim Lovett

The nocturnal habits and cryptic nature of this species makes it difficult to monitor the breeding population using traditional survey methods. In 2018, an urgent need was identified to continue to monitor the changes in breeding numbers. The BTO and Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust have devised a special survey for woodcock, which uses the counts of the territorial roding flight passes undertaken by males at dusk and dawn, to estimate the number of individual males present.

Further information about the survey methods can be found at: <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/woodcock-survey>

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Contact Us

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