



**Pond
Conservation**
For life in fresh waters

**POND CONSERVATION: THE WATER
HABITATS TRUST**

Patron: The Earl of Selborne KBE FRS

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

Registered Charity No. 1107708
A Company registered in England, No. 5317683

Chairman's introduction



This year has been one of the most exciting yet for Pond Conservation. It's our first full year of running the Million Ponds Project: working with many funders and partners to put new clean-water ponds back into the countryside. During the year we produced a toolkit to help everyone join in with the project, and the partnership has dug the first of the 5000 plus ponds we will make over the next four years. Amongst these are many ponds specially targeted to help save over 50 of our rarest freshwater species.

Proof that the Million Ponds Project is desperately needed comes from our analysis of the 2007 Countryside Survey data. The findings show not only that 80% of countryside ponds are in poor condition, but that pond quality has declined rapidly even in the last 10 years. Ponds are incredibly important for freshwater biodiversity and I'm very proud that our Million Ponds Project is

now out there, on the ground, working to help protect our wonderful freshwater wildlife.

This year also saw another first for Pond Conservation – the launch of our Supporters Scheme. It's a way that, at last, everyone can get involved with our work, whether they own a pond or not.

Finally I'd like to thank our team of skilled and committed staff for all their efforts over the past year, our partners who help us with all our work, the charitable trusts and stakeholders who help to sustain Pond Conservation, and our first founding supporters for joining our family.

I hope you enjoy our annual report and as we move on in 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, we are looking forward to the new challenges that await us.

Roger Hyde



Pond Conservation Patron: THE EARL OF SELBOURNE KBE FRS

"Ponds are highly significant because of the biodiversity that they support. I am very proud of Pond Conservation's ongoing work, as they continue to promote and research this important habitat"

John Selborne

About Pond Conservation

Our Background

Pond Conservation is an evidence-based charity that works to protect freshwater biodiversity.

When we started in 1988, our focus was researching the freshwater environment and providing our information to policy makers and practitioners.

Our research has been groundbreaking, and the results widely accepted. However the impact wasn't all we hoped for. In particular, the changes we now knew were urgently needed weren't happening fast enough.

To make sure that our work made the difference we wanted, we transformed our organisation.

Over the last five years, with the generous support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we have re-shaped Pond Conservation so that our knowledge is now directly translated into biodiversity delivery on the ground, and delivers at landscape level

Pond Conservation is the national charity dedicated to protecting our freshwater wildlife.

What we do

Pond Conservation gives advice, undertakes research, promotes practical action and lobbies policy makers to ensure that freshwater wildlife and habitats have a secure future.

We provide training and advice to professionals, land managers and the wider public on the proper assessment and management of ponds and other freshwater habitats.

We work to increase public understanding of freshwater biodiversity, and to influence policy makers so as to build support to increase investment in, and legal protection for, ponds and other vulnerable habitats.

We undertake research in order to provide the evidence for our work.

Wherever possible, we work in partnership with agencies and other charities, and encourage volunteers to locate, record, manage and create more wildlife-rich freshwater habitats.



Ponds support more endangered freshwater plant and animal species than either rivers or lakes and a wider variety of common species too.

Policy

Policy work is an essential part of Pond Conservation's remit because it helps us ensure our freshwaters are better protected by policies and legislation.

In 2009-10, we worked closely with statutory organisations and other NGOs to co-ordinate and implement the **UK Pond Habitat Action Plan**: helping to protect our highest quality ponds and most vulnerable freshwater species.

To back up our advocacy work, we have continued to develop the national coverage of our **Important Areas for Ponds** (IAP) project. This project is vital because, for the first time, it maps out where our best ponds are found so that planners and others are aware of their existence.

Furthermore, by identifying areas where clusters of high quality ponds occur, it is possible to find pond 'hot-spots': providing information about key areas that need to be protected, and where pond creation will be particularly valuable to maintain the existing network.

We have already developed IAPs for Wales and South-East England, and in 2009, we extended this to Northern Ireland with funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

We are pleased to announce that additional funding has been raised from Miller Philanthropy to data-gather for the remaining areas of England during 2010/11.

To find out more visit
[www.pondconservation.org.uk/
pond_hap](http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/pond_hap)



A priority pond in Cumbria © Pond Conservation

The state of our ponds



Ragged Robin © Rod d' Ayala

The first national survey of pond wildlife shows that "Britain's ponds are in a terrible state".

In 2005 Pond Conservation lobbied hard to get pond assessments included for the first time in the Countryside Survey: a regular assessment of the state of the UK countryside, taking place every 7-8 years, commissioned by Defra and NERC.

In 2006-7 we designed the assessment method for the pond survey and we trained staff from the Centre for Hydrology and Ecology who would undertake the work.

Finally in 2009, we analysed the pond survey data. The results showed that a shocking 80% of ponds in the British countryside are in a 'poor' or 'very poor' condition.

This new and startling information achieved significant media coverage, being featured on BBC Breakfast

News and in the national press.

The survey is the first in the world to assess the state of an entire nation's small waterbodies and provides an essential point of reference for policy makers. The findings also underpin much of our practical work and recommendations, specifically the importance of a clean water source, gentle sloped shallow pond margins, and the importance of a mixture of plants to provide diverse habitat for aquatic creatures.

Download the full report from the Countryside Survey web-site

[http://
www.countrysidesurvey.org.uk
/pdf/reports2007/
CS_UK_2007_TR7.pdf](http://www.countrysidesurvey.org.uk/pdf/reports2007/CS_UK_2007_TR7.pdf)

The Million Ponds Project

Second year of pond creation

Ponds are easy and cheap to make, and creating clean new ponds is one of the simplest and most effective things we can do to benefit fresh-water wildlife.

Pond Conservation initiated the Million Ponds Project in 2008, in order to make sure that clean-water pond creation occurs at the landscape scale that is needed to bring major benefits.

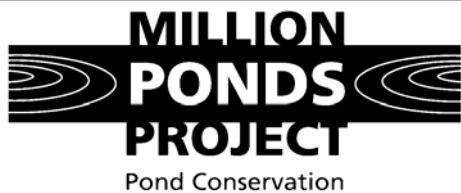
The Project is co-ordinated by Pond Conservation and forms a unique collaboration of major landowners and land managers, funded principally by The Tubney Charitable Trust, with a significant input from Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales and Biffaward.



Gallows Bridge Farm, Oxfordshire © Pond Conservation

The Million Ponds Project aims to create a network of new ponds across the UK that will ultimately reverse over a century of pond loss, ensuring that once again the UK has over one million countryside ponds.

To find out more about the Million Ponds Project and its partners visit <http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds>



© Roger Key

The Spangled Water Beetle (*Graphoderus zonatus*) is one of Britain's rarest species, found only in one location, in a forest in North Hampshire. In Britain the beetle is currently classified as Endangered, and given special protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act

Markers for the Million Ponds Project

The first phase of the Million Ponds Project (2008 to 2012), aims to create 5,000 new clean water ponds in England and Wales.

Around a quarter of the ponds are being specifically targeted to support some of the 100 or so pond-associated species that are now a national priority for conservation action under the UK BAP.

Dr Pascale Nicolet, Million Ponds Project National Coordinator, says....

'In its first one and a half years, the Million Ponds Project has exceeded all of its targets. There are now over a thousand new clean water ponds in the countryside providing a home for Britain's wonderful fresh-water wildlife.'

Threatened plants and animals the project has helped

So far the Million Ponds Project has created ponds for the following Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species:

Plants:

- Tassel Stonewort (*Tolypella intricata*)
- True Fox-sedge (*Carex vulpina*)
- Tubular Water dropwort (*Oenanthe fistulosa*)
- Pillwort (*Pillularia globulifera*)

Amphibians and reptiles:

- Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*)
- Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)
- Natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*)

Mammals:

- Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
- Water Vole (*Arvicola terrestris*)

Aquatic Invertebrates:

- Spangled Water Beetle (*Graphoderus zonatus*)

The Million Ponds Toolkit

One of the aims of the Million Ponds Project is to help everyone to create great wildlife ponds. To do this we have developed the '**Pond Creation Toolkit**' - a comprehensive guide to making new clean water ponds.

The Toolkit includes eight downloadable fact sheets, covering everything from the initial survey and design process, through planning procedures and project management issues, to management of the finished pond.

Since the start of the project, the Pond Creation Toolkit has been downloaded around 14,000 times from our website.



© David Orchard

To find out more visit <http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds/pondcreationtoolkit>

New ponds being created at Abney Hall, Stockport in Spring 2010, funded through the Million Ponds Project

ALSF Aggregates project

Our aggregates project is a specialist arm of the Million Ponds Project, and aims to support the aggregates industry in creating high quality, clean-water ponds on their sites. These new ponds will contribute to National and regional Pond Habitat Action Plan targets.

The aggregates element of the Million Ponds Project was launched in November 2009 and is funded by Natural England through Defra's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund and is backed by the British Aggregates Association and the Mineral Products Association.

Aggregates sites are excellent places to create clean water ponds, and they can be integrated as part of most extraction after-uses, including nature conservation, amenity or housing.

The ponds can be created during the restoration phase, but also on sites which have already been restored, where ponds can be 'retro-fitted' as part of management activities.

Our Minerals Project Officer, Maddy Ryan, is now working to advise

aggregates industry stakeholders on clean water pond creation and will be in post until March 2011. During this time she aims to ensure the creation of 100-200 clean water ponds on aggregates sites.

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds/aggregates>

A number of resources are available to support pond creation within the project. This includes:

- Free site visits, design advice and other technical support
- The Pond Creation Toolkit (available online)
- Bespoke training courses



Kings Dyke, Peterborough © Pond Conservation

The Pond Digging Fund

We are still fundraising towards our target of £50,000, to unlock the designated £500,000 of Landfill Community Funds from Biffaward. Every £10 donated generates £100 of funds to support the creation of ponds. To date, £32,000 has been raised, allowing us to release 60% of the funding available. The remaining £18,000 will be raised during 2010 to allow us to release the final payment.

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/supportus/millionpondsappeal>

Our sponsor Biffaward provided 25% of a total grant allocation of £500,000 in May 2009 to support the creation of 197 clean water ponds.

This will provide new pond habitats at 45 sites across England and Wales for 21 pond associated BAP species.



Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) © Jo Cartmell

Creating more Ponds



Dr Pascale Nicolet, the National Co-ordinator for the Million Ponds Project, uses a conductivity meter to check water quality

Contact the team

Our Million Ponds Team is led by: **Pascale Nicolet** (National Coordinator/South region), with **Penny Williams** (South region), **Rebecca Good** (Wales) and **Becca Cleaver** (North region).

Dawn Isaac, seconded to the project from Natural England, managed pond projects funded by Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme until February 2010.

Paul Lacey also from Natural England will replace Dawn in March 2010.

We also have two specialist officers:

David Orchard, (Amphibian and Reptile Ponds Officer seconded from Amphibian and Reptile Conservation), and **Maddy Ryan** (Minerals Officer).

Why not join in!

The Million Ponds Project also assists landowners who want to create clean water ponds on their land, but do not need additional funding.

Million Ponds officers can play an important role during the vital early planning stages by providing advice and support to ensure that the new ponds will meet the three criteria of the project (i) have a clean water source, (ii) be left to colonise naturally and (iii) be left to thrive without undue disturbance.

New ponds can be registered online to contribute to the overall Million Ponds target on our website:

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds/reporting>

Working with communities

South Yorkshire Ponds Project

The South Yorkshire Ponds Project, which started in May 2008, is a joint initiative between Pond Conservation and the South Yorkshire Biodiversity Forum, with funding from Heritage Lottery Fund, SITA Trust and the Environment Agency.

The project is creating a county pond inventory; contributing to the identification of Important Areas for Ponds (IAPs) and locating sites for new ponds. In 2009 surveys underpinning practical pond restoration and management work were undertaken at 20 ponds across the region, resulting in work to restore existing ponds, and create new ponds at 16 sites.

The Pond Conservation project team comprises **Chris Monk** and **Bob Eades**, assisted by local volunteers, community groups and the Sheffield Wildlife Trust.



Hexthorpe Ings beside the river Don near Doncaster, South Yorkshire is an important wetland site.

In 2009 the South Yorkshire Ponds Project created 3 shallow pools, which are already important for water beetles and amphibians.

Ponds for People – The Blackpool Trail

We have continued to plan and trial this ground breaking new program, which aims to focus community engagement on delivering biodiversity goals. The first of these is the development of the Pond Trail programme in the Blackpool district with the Groundwork Trust.

Based on a bid with an unprecedented level of local community support, the Blackpool Trail has been successful in attracting funds from Natural England's Access to Nature fund, with the remaining 10% of funds from other sources.

The project will run from August 2010 to September 2013. It involves over 6,700 people in all aspects of the programme, from surveying and monitoring wildlife sites, habitat management works, developing interpretative materials, attending events, and simply using the trail for leisure.



Pond Supporters Programme

From its launch in 2009, Pond Conservation supporters' scheme has proven to be very successful, with lots of interest from garden pond owners, as well as a diverse range of organisations with care of a pond.

In 2009, we attended a number of events including the RHS Greener Gardening Show in April, BBC Gardener's World Live in June, the CLA Game Fair in July and the RSPB Birdfair in August, meeting lots of pond lovers along the way.

Our demonstration trays of aquatic bugs proved to be a particular talking point, as people met the creatures living in their ponds, close up!

We have worked hard to develop and improve the supporter's programme. Almost uniquely, we offer our supporters free water testing, a bespoke pond advice package, as well as regular e-newsletters and other information.



© Pond Conservation

Our stand at the 2009 RHS Greener Gardening Show, with trays and a microscopes for a closer view

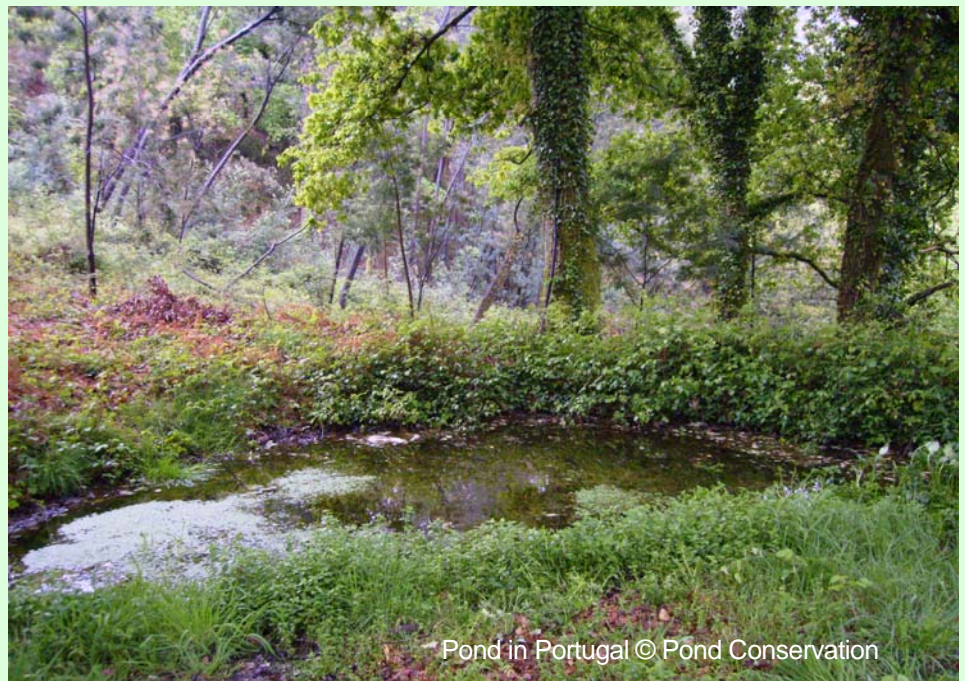
Working in Europe

Pond Conservation has played a key role in the establishment of the European Pond Conservation Network (EPCN) which now has participants in over 25 countries.

In 2009 EPCN started its first fully-funded project, Pro-Pond. Supported by the MAVA Foundation, this exciting project aims to provide a major stimulus for pond conservation across Europe and North Africa.

We have co-ordinated the Pro-pond project since its beginnings. So far the project's outputs have included:

- the Pond Manifesto', which outlines a strategy for the conservation of ponds in Europe;
- a typology of European ponds;
- identification of Important Areas for Ponds in the Mediterranean and the Alpine Arc, and
- a series of specialist training courses.



Pond in Portugal © Pond Conservation

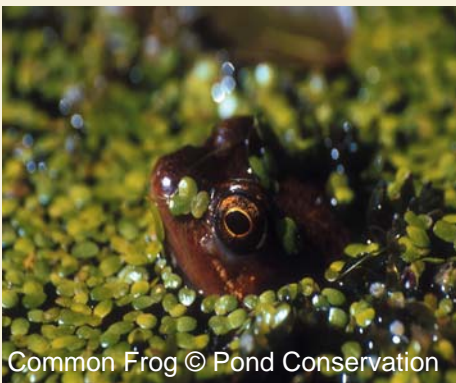
The EPCN is a Europe-wide network of practical conservation groups and technical specialists interested in pond conservation. It aims to promote awareness, understanding and conservation of ponds in a changing European landscape.

Garden Ponds

Working with gardeners for wildlife

Our garden pond programme is continuing to expand, as we completed the first national public survey of garden ponds through the 'Big Pond Dip'.

This was our first detailed research project on garden ponds nationally, and the results have given us lots of new recommendations for wildlife gardeners. For example it has highlighted the importance of clean water, and shallow pond margins planted up with lots of native plants and grasses.



Sieves at the ready for some dipping fun...

You can download the full results from our website:

[http://
www.pondconservation.org.uk/
bigponddip/
firstresultsbigponddip](http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/bigponddip/firstresultsbigponddip)

The results of the 2009 Big Pond Dip

- Three quarters of garden ponds had water snails, water beetles and pond skaters.
- Virtually all ponds were visited by amphibians and, in around 60%, amphibians were breeding – suggesting 1½ million to 2½ million breeding sites for amphibians in gardens.
- Garden ponds also represent somewhere between 1½ million and 2½ million breeding sites for dragonflies and damselflies.
- However, some of the most sensitive creatures, like caddisflies and alderflies, were seen only in about 10% of ponds. Even so this represents an amazing one to two hundred thousand garden ponds.

The Big Pond Thaw

The Big Pond Thaw

The success of the first Big Pond Dip in 2009 spawned its sibling, the Big Pond Thaw.

The winter of 2009/10 was the hardest for 30 years in the UK, and many ponds froze for much longer than in recent years. As the ice melted, we started to receive reports from distressed pond owners about dead amphibians, mainly frogs, that had been overwintering in their ponds.

We asked pond owners to tell us more about their ponds during the freezing weather, to find out what factors were important.

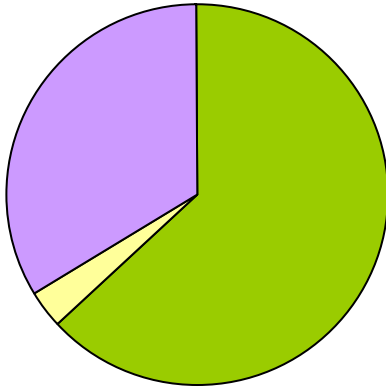
We compiled the results and produced a report with suggestions of how best to mitigate the effects of exceptionally cold weather.



You can download the results of the 2010 Big Pond Thaw from : [http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/bigponddip/
bigpondthawresults2010](http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/bigponddip/bigpondthawresults2010)

Financial Summary

Income



	Amount	%
Restricted grants	£331,458	63
Unrestricted grants, donations, interest	£16,147	3
Income from charitable activities	£177,645	34
Total	£525,250	100

Expenditure



	Amount	%
Charitable Activities	£469,020	91
Fundraising	£40,172	8
Governance	£5,886	1
Total	£515,078	100

We would like to offer a special thank you to the following organisations that have provided Pond Conservation with financial or other support this year:



SUPPORT POND CONSERVATION

Why not become a Pond Conservation supporter!

Your support allows us to continue our vital conservation work. Over the past year it has allowed us to help create and improve many hundreds of ponds for wildlife, and given us a voice that can be heard by politicians and other policy makers.

Signing up is easy on our secure web-site:

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/supportus/joinus>

You can also make a one off donation online, or by sending a cheque payable to Pond Conservation to the address below.

For more information about Pond Conservation please contact us at info@pondconservation.org.uk or on 01865 483114

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/>

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