



Pond Conservation
For life in fresh waters

Protecting life in fresh water
Annual Report 2010/2011



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For life in fresh waters

Pond Conservation in brief

Pond Conservation is a national charity created in 1988 to protect the wildlife of our freshwaters.

Life in freshwater is under threat everywhere; we aim to protect it through strong practical action backed by good information.

We think that maintaining a rich and healthy freshwater environment brings benefits for everyone – now and in the future.

Our organisation has a strong research background, and over the last few years with support from funders such as the Esmée Fairbairn



Foundation and the Tubney Charitable Trust, we've been putting this knowledge directly into practice on the ground and spreading the message to people at home and in the community.

(Top) The New Forest is one of the most important areas of Britain for freshwater wildlife. Fletchers Green Pond near Brockenhurst, a heathland temporary pond, is one of hundreds of Priority Ponds in the Forest.

(Bottom) Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*) in a New Forest temporary pond. Ponds of this type are protected under the Habitats Directive but are extremely vulnerable to pollution, and may also be threatened by alien species.



Neil Phillips



What we do

- 🌀 We aim to inspire everyone to support the conservation of freshwaters.
- 🌀 We implement practical solutions based on the best knowledge.
- 🌀 We champion ponds, rivers and lakes to decision makers.
- 🌀 We work with people, communities and organisations to protect freshwater wildlife.
- 🌀 We support our practical conservation work with research, survey, policy work, and education and fundraising.







(Top left) Like many freshwater animals Common Backswimmers (*Notonecta glauca*) can be seen in all kinds of freshwater but are commonest in ponds and lakes.

(Bottom left) The Environment Agency created over 30 new ponds at Rye Harbour in Sussex, part of their contribution to the Million Ponds Project.

(Right) Volunteer surveyors piloting our Flagship Ponds programme at Brechfa Pool in Powys. The site supports several endangered freshwater plants in its extensive drawdown zones but is threatened by nutrient pollution.



Key achievements 2010-11

-  Started the Important Areas for Ponds Project
-  Created the first 1000 ponds with our partners in the Million Ponds Project; trained 750 people in clean water pond creation methods
-  Gave ponds a high profile in the Natural Environment White Paper and the National Ecosystem Assessment
-  Began the Water Friendly Farming project
-  Ran the Big Pond Dip garden pond survey
-  Piloted the Flagship Ponds concept with local groups and volunteers in Wales

(Top left) Broad-bodied Chaser dragonfly is recorded from 1 in 10 high quality ponds; in degraded ponds this drops to 1 in 30.

(Bottom left) The Million Ponds Project trained around 750 people in 2010-11.

(Right) Million Ponds Project National Co-ordinator Pascale Nicolet describes the benefits of making new temporary ponds.



Campaigning for ponds

Ponds are vital for freshwater wildlife but are the poor relation in legislation, compared to other freshwaters. So they need strong advocates and concerted action to protect them on the ground.

During the year we worked hard, lobbying to ensure that ponds and clean water networks featured in two important government policy documents: the National Ecosystem Assessment and England's Natural Environment White Paper.

We succeeded in both, and the importance of ponds was specifically highlighted in the Natural Environment White Paper. Added to this the Million Ponds Project BAP species web map was used as case study of good practice in making information widely available to everyone.

(Above) The Rt. Hon. Richard Benyon in discussion with Pond Conservation's Director, Dr Jeremy Biggs.



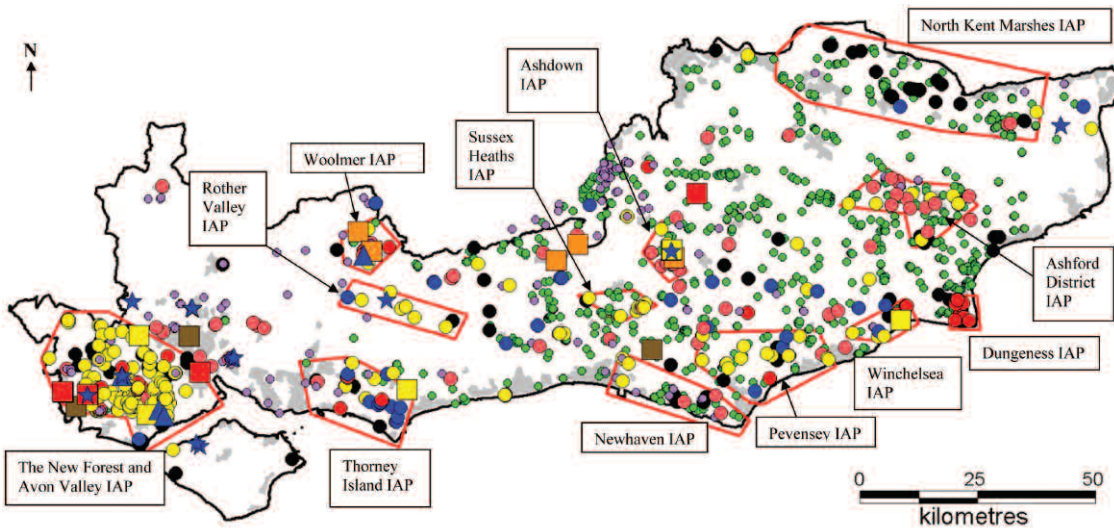
Setting the agenda

The Natural Environment White Paper

“...small water bodies such as ponds and ditches play a critical role in supporting ecosystem services (intercepting, storing and routing water and nutrients, transporting and transforming carbon, and supporting biodiversity).”

“Ponds alone support 70% of freshwater biodiversity and more endangered species than lakes, rivers, streams or ditches. Land managers and communities can add diversity to ecological networks in an inexpensive and highly effective way, by creating small clean water bodies across the countryside.”

(Above) The Fowl's Pill in Oxfordshire, protected inside a Defence Infrastructure Organisation firing range, is one of the country's best wildlife ponds



Protecting important habitats

Around half of all threatened freshwater plants and animals use ponds. And some are so rare they are hanging on in barely a handful of sites.

Thanks to Biodiversity Action Plan legislation, our best ponds have limited protection as “Priority Ponds” making it harder for developers to damage them or fill them in.

A critical first step to help protect these high quality ponds is simply finding out and showing everyone where the best ponds are located.

In 2010 we started our **Important Areas for Ponds** project for England, funded by Miller Philanthropy. The project is gathering, analysing and making available, information on the location of Priority Ponds so that everyone from householders to planners and government bodies know where they are.

(Above) In 2010-11 we identified Important Areas for Ponds in south-east England – areas with significant groupings of Priority Ponds – with financial support from the Environment Agency. We are now completing the process for the rest of England.



Putting back clean water in the landscape

The Million Ponds Project

Ponds are small and easily created but support more species, common and endangered, than any other freshwater habitat type. If you make new ponds in places where they can have clean water they can quickly become fantastic wildlife habitats.

Making new ponds to put back clean water in the landscape is the aim of the 50-year Million Ponds Project, a national partnership initiative led by Pond Conservation.

The Million Ponds Project is the biggest ever pond creation programme. Its first phase will see the creation of 5000 clean water ponds across England and Wales by 2012.

In 2010-11 the project reached all its targets, including pond creation, training and publicity. We also expanded the Pond Creation Toolkit with the publication of the BAP Species Map, an online mapping tool which tells you which pond-associated BAP species are in your area, and gives habitat design tips for each species.

(Above) The Million Ponds Project produced a wide variety of new information about clean water pond creation including a series of landscape factsheets: this shows pond creation on floodplains.



Research to find out what works

One of Pond Conservation's core values is that our advice and conservation work must be evidence-based.

If there are essential gaps in knowledge we undertake high quality research to fill these gaps.

Currently, one of the most shocking information gaps is just how little is known about the value of measures to control agricultural pollution, to clean up water and protect freshwater life. This is despite the fact that millions of pounds are being spent on buffer strips, constructed wetlands, riverside fencing and reducing fertiliser use to try to stop pollution effects.

To start finding out what really does work we have developed a major research programme Water Friendly Farming, working with Game & Wildlife Conservation, Syngenta, University of York, the Environment Agency, the Chemicals Regulatory Directorate, Anglian Water and others. We are finding out what happens to the ponds, streams, smaller headwaters and ditches across whole landscapes when we install measures intended to stop pollution and recreate new habitat. The results will have profound implications for the way we protect freshwater life.

(Above) The evidence-base for what works to protect freshwater wildlife at a catchment scale is surprisingly weak. Our Water Friendly Farming project will help us determine whether installing buffer strips, cleaning-up sewage works, re-meandering rivers or making ponds makes most difference at a catchment scale.



Helping people help wildlife

People are the key to our success. To achieve our objectives we aim to inspire a wide range of people at home, in their communities and in other conservation organisations, and ensure that this enthusiasm is translated into action on the ground.

Training: In 2010/11 the Million Ponds Project trained over 750 key staff from organisations as diverse as the Environment Agency, Defence Infrastructure Organisation, RSPB and National Trust providing information on how to locate and design clean water ponds for wildlife.

Information: we created the most comprehensive toolkit of information yet about pond creation, and endangered pond associated species. It is accessible to everyone and was downloaded about 15,000 times in the year.

Community: Most community work on ponds helps people but doesn't do much for ponds. We've been testing and developing a range of new approaches to engaging communities including piloting community group programmes with Flagship Ponds in Wales, the North Blackpool Pond Trail and work with individual local groups.



Life in garden ponds

Ponds are hugely popular, one of the first places where people experience the freshwater environment.

Garden ponds are key to our awareness raising strategy, and allow us to reach far beyond the normal ‘conservation’ audience.

We completed the second year of our national public survey the **‘Big Pond Dip’** which we ran in conjunction with the OPAL Water project in 2010. This ground-breaking approach is the first time that such a detailed research project has been conducted on garden ponds nationally, and the results have given us lots of new recommendations for wildlife gardeners.

Big Pond Dip survey results

- Over a third of ponds surveyed were classed as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.
- Two thirds of ponds had breeding dragonflies or damselflies, and 75% had water snails, water beetles and pond skaters.
- 90% of ponds were visited by amphibians, and over 60% had amphibians breeding.
- 50% of ponds were filled with rainwater – an excellent clean-water source.

(Above) Results from the Big Pond Dip suggest that Smooth Newts are more likely to breed in garden ponds judged ‘good or high quality’ in terms of their invertebrates – we now need more detailed studies to confirm this suggestion.



Our impact beyond the UK

The EPCN, now in its eighth year, is continuing to provide a forum for communication between pond researchers and practitioners.

The MAVA-funded project Pro-pond (Promoting pond conservation in Europe and the Mediterranean region) was completed in July 2010 and the eight deliverables are available to download from the website.

The project enabled the network to set up the website, publish the Pond Manifesto – now available in 6 languages, and identify Important Areas for Ponds in the Alpine Arc and the Mediterranean regions.

All are key tools in raising the profile of ponds in Europe.

(Above) In the farmland of eastern Poland ponds are often in much better condition than is normal in Britain – almost certainly this is because they are less polluted.



Neil Phillips



In the future

There are many thousands of priority ponds – important for UK wildlife – that we cannot directly influence through our own partnership projects. To reach these ponds, we will supply a wide range of information and advice to help people get out and do it themselves.

We will set up a Flagship Ponds Project, working with community groups and others, to ensure that there is monitoring and active protection of the most important ponds or groups of ponds.

These ponds will also have an important educational role: it is important that they are wonderful places. People increasingly see only badly damaged ponds whose muddy water and impoverished wildlife offers little inspiration.

We believe that it will require vigilance to protect our top quality ponds, rivers and lakes if they are to retain their quality. With Natural England, Defra and partner wildlife organisations we are testing a volunteer-based approach to monitoring ponds and other freshwaters.

(Top right) Three-spined Sticklebacks are the epitome of life in freshwater: surprisingly we know almost nothing about the status of this species.

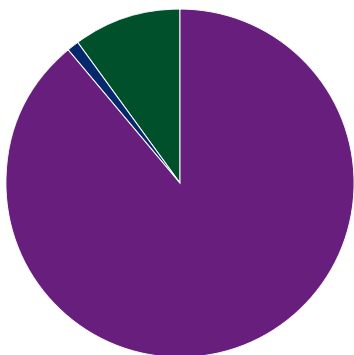
(Bottom right) Clean water ponds will make an increasingly important contribution to protecting freshwater wildlife over the next 20 years.

Financial summary

Summarised statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2011*

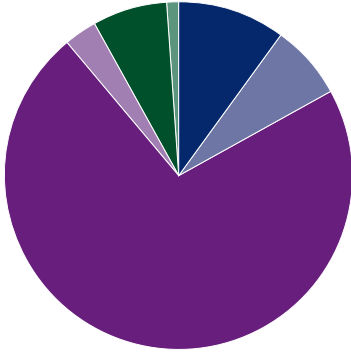
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2011 £	Total 2010 £
Income	66,830	539,864	606,694	525,250
Expenditure	157,572	454,388	611,960	515,078
Net resources	-90,742	85,476	-5,266	10,172
Funds brought forward	125,360	55,210	280,570	270,398
Funds carried forward	34,618	240,686	275,304	280,570







Income



	2011 £	%	2010 £
Restricted grants	539,864	89%	331,458
Unrestricted grants, donations, interest	8,8672	1%	16,147
Income from charitable activities	57,963	10%	177,645
Total	606,694	100%	525,250

Expenditure



	2011 £	%	2010 £
Charitable activities			
 Research	63,210	10%	144,017
 Communication, training and education	43,555	7%	25,465
 Creation and conservation of ponds and wetland habitats	437,583	72%	297,870
 Influence on policy matters	17,504	3%	1,668
Total charitable activities	561,852	92%	469,020
 Fundraising	42,885	7%	40,172
 Governance	7,223	1%	5,886
Total	611,960	100%	515,078

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:



Sheffield & Rotherham



Roy Anderson



Glutinous Snail

**DECLARED EXTINCT
IN ENGLAND IN 2010**

Become a Pond Conservation supporter

With help from people who care we can
protect our precious freshwater wildlife

YOU CAN JOIN US ONLINE:

www.pondconservation.org.uk/supportus/joinus

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Front cover photograph: *Water-violet, a plant of unpolluted ponds and ditches, has disappeared from many parts of the English countryside because of water pollution.*