Newsletter

February 2010

Working with you to explore local biodiversity

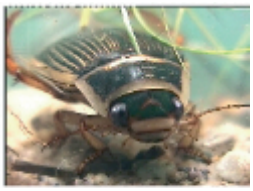
If you are extremely optimistic, you can look around outside and find lots of signs of the approaching spring. Besides the snowdrops (above) I have seen blue tits checking out a nest box and a magpie hauling a stick up a tree to use as nesting material. We are also hoping to see some activity from the frogs in the garden pond before too long, but the only sure sign of the arrival of spring is the sight of the Hi-Tech Wild-Trek trailer on the road again! This will not happen until March, but now is the time to be making sure of your booking for 2010. Check on the website to see if you are in the diary - www.5kingdoms.co.uk/2010.html

If you do not wish to receive this monthly communication direct to your inbox, please e-mail Richard and you will be removed from the mailing list. The newsletter will also appear on the 5kingdoms.co.uk website.

Calling all schools in Test Valley

If you are at a school in Test Valley, now is the time to be watching out for the letter inviting you to come along to one of your local nature reserves. You can book either a morning or afternoon session during which you can tour the reserve with the countryside officer and investigate the freshwater animals with the help of the Hi-Tech Wild-Trek trailer. Each year, pupils help to record data about the animal populations and this can be used to monitor changes on the sites. You can see the data on our website - follow the link to Test Valley from the home page - and you can use it to draw graphs and see if you can spot any trends. If you don't receive a letter or want to know more about this opportunity, contact Leisure on 01264 368000 and ask to speak with a member of the countryside team.

Unusual Greetings Cards and other exceptional products



Are you bored with greetings cards that show cute and cuddly animals or pleasant pastoral scenes? - Possibly not but there is an alternative. You can now send a card showing one of the impressive underwater creatures that are regularly encountered on-board the HI-Tech Wild-Trek trailer. We have selected 4 of our more striking images to illustrate a set of note cards - left blank inside to suit any occasion - that will be available for sale from the trailer and also, hopefully, other outlets. If you have a retail outlet and would like to stock these unique items then please get in touch. Pricing details are still being worked out, but by next month, they will be available to purchase directly from us.

A new identification aid is currently being tested and should be available this spring also. It is a development of the sorting mat that we have used on some of our recent visits and is intended to allow novice bug hunters to discover what type of animal they have caught. We still have our range of identification charts, which is being revised and extended for the start of the 2010 season, and other products to assist in wildlife explorations and education. Visit "Resources" on our website for more information.

Dipping Deeper

Dipping Deeper is our scheme that will provide help and encouragement to those who want to take their interest in freshwater life a little further. We are now taking bookings for the first of our events - Testwood Lakes at Totton, near Southampton on Saturday 13th March 2010. This day will offer plenty of time for exploring aquatic environments, catching a broad range of animals and learning more about how to identify them and how they fit into the underwater community. Testwood Lakes is a fully equipped visitor centre and so there is the opportunity to work indoors if the weather is bad. Spaces on this day will be limited to 10 people and is intended for adults and older teenagers. This is a pilot event and so is being offered at a bargain rate of £15 per person (sufficient to cover expenses for the day). The timings haven't been fixed yet but it will be for a full day and you will need to bring your own lunch. If you would like to reserve a place on this course, please get in touch. It is hoped to set up a similar event in Sussex, also during the spring of 2010. Our thanks go to Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust for the use of Testwood Lakes.

On the Road in 2010

There is another fascinating year in prospect with trips to Devon and the Lake District already in the diary. We will be returning to the Thames at Henley for a "Riverbank to Wild Wood" day, and visitng many of our regular haunts in Hampshire and Sussex Don't forget, that if you want us to hold a date for you while you are still in the planning stage, we are happy to do so. If the same date is requested by anyone else we will check back with you to see if you are able to confirm or not. The booking conditions for the trailer can be found on our website along with some guidelines about the way that the trailer can be used to enhance the exploration of wildlife in schools or at public events.

>> On Sat 20th March, the HTWT trailer will be at the ASE's Fun-da-Mental Science event at the University of Southampton <<

The Hi-Tech Wild-Trek trailer is operated by: Roslyne Ecological, 13 Swanmore Park, Swanmore, Southampton, Hants. SO32 2QS
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