

Parish Biodiversity Audit

for

Belstone



June 2008

Report produced by Sue Searle of Acorn Ecology
www.acornecology.co.uk

Report commissioned by Devon County Council
www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity



Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
DESIGNATED SITES	4
DARTMOOR SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION/NORTH DARTMOOR SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	4
HALSTOCK WOODS SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	5
SKAIGH WOOD ANCIENT WOODLAND:	6
<u>OTHER HABITATS (IDENTIFIED FROM FIELD SURVEY):</u>	7
SPECIES-RICH HEDGES	7
CHURCHYARD	11
STONE WALLS	11
RECREATION AREAS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	11
GARDENS	12
ROADSIDE VERGES	12
GREEN LANES	13
POTENTIAL COUNTY WILDLIFE SITES	14
<u>SPECIES</u>	17
IMPORTANT SPECIES	17
BIRDS	17
PLANTS	18
MAMMALS	19
INVERTEBRATES	21
REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS	23
<u>THE DEVON BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (BAP).</u>	24
BIODIVERSITY LINKS:	24
LINKS BETWEEN THE WILDLIFE OF BELSTONE AND THE DEVON AND DARTMOOR BAPs:	25
<u>SOME IDEAS FOR LOCAL ACTION...</u>	27
1 FURTHER SURVEY:	27
2 INFLUENCE THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE:	28
3 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL LANDOWNERS:	28
4 ADOPT A ROAD VERGE:	28
5 WILDLIFE GARDENING:	29
6 JOIN LOCAL CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS:	29
7 JAPANESE KNOTWEED:	29
<u>USEFUL SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION:</u>	30
POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING:	31
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	33
APPENDIX 1 – NOTABLE SITES AND SPECIES WITHIN BELSTONE PARISH	29
APPENDIX 2 – SPECIES LIST FROM FIELD SURVEY (8 TH DECEMBER 2006)	37

Belstone - Parish Plan Biodiversity Project

This document has been produced as a starting point to help community action for wildlife. By starting to bring together knowledge of the natural assets of the Parish, it may go some way to achieving its aim of contributing to - and stimulating ideas for – local action.

It should be emphasised that it is just a beginning. It does not represent a comprehensive account of the Parish and is based very largely on existing records held by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre. There will be a wealth of local knowledge that can be used to build upon and improve this report. Indeed, it is important that it is seen as a 'living document' and one that belongs to the Parish. It is hoped that it will be added to and refined by the people of Belstone Parish in future years.

Introduction

Belstone, situated on the northern fringe of Dartmoor lies fully within the National Park. It is rich in varied habitats which support a diverse array of plants, insects, birds and mammals.

Around a third of the Parish is designated for nature conservation with the North Dartmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest, recently also designated as the Dartmoor Special Area of Conservation being identified as of European importance for upland moorland. Within the Parish's part of this site is dwarf shrub moorland, valley mire, acid grassland and bracken areas. This habitat in turn supports wildlife such as ring ouzels, buzzards, ravens, whinchat, wheatear and other moorland birds as well as diverse mosses, lichens and ferns. It forms one of the last vast 'wilderness' areas left in Britain.

Water is a great feature of the Parish with two rivers, the East Okement on the western boundary and the River Taw on the southern and eastern boundary, as well as many springs and streams with associated ponds, bogs, wet woodland and marshy grasslands. The main rivers are fast-flowing with rocky and gravely beds and are home to otters, brown trout, salmon and dippers whilst the wetlands support diverse plant communities.

The northern part of the Parish is farmland in the form of permanent pasture which supports cattle and sheep. Small fields with traditional hedgerows dividing them are a great feature, not only for wildlife but also adding character to this ancient landscape. In places the fields show signs of being remnant Medieval strip fields as they are narrow with a distinctive curve. Hedgerows are, in places, massive and most are species rich, and probably Medieval, offering a good habitat for a variety of wildlife including wild flowers, insects and birds. At higher altitudes the field boundaries become stone faced banks with beech trees on top and on the moorland they are stone

walls. These have potential for harbouring reptiles, small mammals and crevice-nesting birds such as wrens as well as being a good substrate for a diverse lichens, mosses and rock-loving plants such as navelwort and stonecrop.

Around the Parish, especially on the moorland edges and in the Belstone Cleave and Priestacott areas, there are some remnants of species-rich grassland, wet meadows and hay meadows, all of which have escaped the general trend for agricultural intensification. These now rare grassland habitats are rich in wild flowers and insects. Much of the Parish is under either Environmentally Sensitive Area or Dartmoor National Park management agreements to ensure that these and other precious habitats are not lost.

Woodland is another key feature of the Parish and Halstock Woods and Skaigh Woods lie on the periphery with Belstone Cleave becoming increasingly wooded. This habitat supports a diverse lichen flora and bird life as well as dormice. Parts of the woodlands are wet and dominated by willows and these offer a habitat for other mosses, ferns and birds such as willow warbler. Surrounding bracken slopes offer habitat for rare butterflies like the pearl-bordered fritillary. Three species of bats have been recorded at Skaigh House on the edge of Belstone Cleave and the woodland, river and pasture would be a valuable habitat for these insect-eating species. Many of the old buildings in the Parish probably also have roosting bats and further survey could discover new roosts and important feeding areas.

Access around the Parish is served by two major long-distance trails – the Dartmoor Way and the Tarka Trail – as well as several other footpaths and bridle paths. All of these paths, as well as areas of open access land, offer people a chance to discover the Parish's rich wildlife.

Wildlife highlights of the Parish are:

- Dartmoor National Park.
- North Dartmoor Special Area of Conservation/Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Ancient woodlands at west Cleave Woods and Skaigh Woods.
- Unimproved species-rich grasslands in the valleys and on moorland edges.
- Species-rich ancient hedges in the northern part of the Parish.

Designated Sites

Dartmoor Special Area of Conservation/North Dartmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest

North Dartmoor SSSI covers an area of 13,561 hectares and contains one of the largest areas of upland semi-natural habitat in southern Britain and lies within Dartmoor National Park. It forms part of the Dartmoor SAC (total 23,166 ha) which is a European designation. With large areas of wet and dry heath it is particularly important for blanket bog and valley mire communities. It also supports a diverse upland breeding bird community including the only regular breeding populations of golden plover and dunlin in southern Britain as well as breeding whinchat, wheatear and ring ouzel. Among the more unusual species recorded on site are cranberry on the open moor, fir clubmoss, lemon-scented fern, Tunbridge filmy-fern; Wilson's filmy-fern in wet shaded crevices in scree slopes; and bog orchid in a few mires. Most of this area is common land and open for access.



Belstone Common is part of the Dartmoor SAC/North Dartmoor SSSI

Key habitats:

- oak woodland (DBAP/UKBAP)
- rivers, streams, floodplain and fluvial processes (DBAP)
- blanket bog (UKBAP)
- upland heathland (UKBAP)

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are notified by Natural England (was English Nature) because they contain species and/or habitats of European importance (listed in the Habitats Directive 1994), and are part of a network of conservation sites set up through Europe known as the Natura 2000 series. On land, almost all candidate SACs are, or will be notified as SSSIs. Natural England needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SAC is a statutory designation with legal implications.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are notified by Natural England (was English Nature) because of their plants, animals or geological features (the latter are geological SSSIs or gSSSI). Natural England needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SSSI is a statutory designation with legal implications.

Halstock Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest

Though just outside of the Parish boundary, Halstock Wood, covering an area of 10.3 hectares, is an example of an upland sessile oakwood, supporting a wide range of plants and birds. This ancient semi-natural woodland lies on east-facing slopes above the East Okement River, at an altitude of 250-300 m and on the boundary of the Parish.

Halstock Woods SSSI blends into other ancient woodland which shares many of its characteristics, including on the eastern bank of the East Okement River, within the Parish boundary.

The dominant tree species of the SSSI is sessile oak with ash and pedunculate oak interspersed throughout and alder on the river banks. Hazel dominates the understorey, with occasional holly and guelder-rose. A diverse ground flora includes bluebell, wood anemone, pignut, sanicle, common cow-wheat and ramsons and with bilberry in more acidic parts. Occasional wet flushes occur on the lower slopes characterised by meadowsweet and opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage. At least 79 species of lichen occur in the wood, with a particularly well-developed *Parmelietum laevigatae* community on the trees: the species *Graphina ruiziana*, found on smooth-barked trees near the river, is a local species on Dartmoor.

Some 30 species of bird breed in the wood, including raven, buzzard, redstart and wood warbler. The woods along the East Okement, of which Halstock Wood forms a large part, are of particular interest as the site has one of the largest colonies of pied flycatcher in South West England. Otter have been recorded in the East Okement River and it is likely that Atlantic salmon is found in the river and dippers occur there. Dormice are also likely to be present in the woodland. There is good riverside access via the Tarka Trail giving people the chance to experience the wildlife of the woods and the river.



East Okement River in Halstock Woods

Key habitats:

- oak woodland (DBAP/UKBAP)
- rivers, streams, floodplain and fluvial processes (DBAP)

Key species:

- otter (DBAP/UKBAP)
- atlantic salmon (DBAP)
- (dormouse (DBAP/UKBAP))

Skaigh Wood Ancient Woodland:

Skaigh Wood is owned by the Parish but lies just outside, on the outskirts of Sticklepath. Part of it is defined in the Ancient Woodland Inventory as ancient woodland whilst other parts are secondary woodland where the trees have spread along the valley toward Belstone Cleave. On the steeper slopes it gives way to moorland (Skaigh Warren) and here some tree planting has been carried out to extend the woodland. Dartmoor National Park have been advising and helping with management of the woodland.

Ancient Woodland is a term applied to woodlands which have existed from at least Medieval times to the present day without ever having been cleared for uses other than wood or timber production. A convenient date used to separate ancient and secondary woodland is about the year 1600. In special circumstances semi-natural woods of post-1600 but pre-1900 origin are also included. The Devon Ancient Woodland Inventory was prepared in 1986 by the Nature Conservancy Council.

Key habitats:

- oak woodland (DBAP/UKBAP)
- rivers, streams, floodplain and fluvial processes (DBAP)

Key species:

- dormouse (DBAP/UKBAP)
- primrose (DBAP)

Section 3 land

There are also areas in the Parish designated as Section 3 Woodland and Section 3 Moorland by Dartmoor National Park. Land designated under Section 3 of the Wildlife & Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985 as being of particular conservation importance. Under the 1985 Act the NPA is required to prepare a map (the Section 3 Conservation Map) showing areas of woodland and moorland the natural beauty of which it is, in the view of the Authority, particularly important to conserve. These are shown on the accompanying map showing records and designations.

Other habitats (identified from field survey):**Species-rich hedges**

Hedgerows tend to be taken for granted as they always seem to be there, providing such a constant in a familiar landscape. However, they do require regular attention to keep them in good condition. That so many are still in good condition is a testament to the skill and hard work of generations of farmers. But there are changes even in the oldest hedgelines as the way the majority are managed has altered. There is now less farm labour available and more reliance on mechanical cutting rather than traditional hedge laying (or, as it is known in Devon, 'steeping').

Even the mechanical cutting has changed as reciprocating cutters that could cut shrub stems cleanly have given way to tractor-mounted flails which can tackle slightly older growth but at the expense of every stem being shattered. Flailing can actually promote bud development (on hawthorn, for example, research indicates that severe damage to the end of a branch encourages shoot development further down in the base of the plant which can help to thicken it up). However, flailing can also leave shrubs susceptible to infection. As individual hedge plants die, they leave gaps which render the hedge less effective and which would in the past have been filled when the hedge was next steeped. Many of the hedges in the Parish are regularly flailed or trimmed leaving them a neat box shape.



Poorly managed hedges are less valuable to wildlife and become less stock-proof.

With the advent of mechanical hedge-trimming has come another change - it is now possible to trim all the hedges on a farm in one year. It is this that perhaps has had the most impact on the vertebrate wildlife. Fruiting and seeding species are very much less productive and there is a different and less varied structure. Also, shrubs that do produce a good berry crop are sometimes cut in the early autumn before the birds, particularly the migrants, can gain any advantage from this food source. A couple of generations ago, many hedges on a farm might have been cut less frequently, allowing them to be much more productive in the meantime.

Recognising these changes does allow choices in the way hedges are managed in the future. Hedges can be cut on a two or even three year rotation. Alternatively, perhaps only one or two of the three 'faces' (the top and the two sides) could be cut in any one year. This wouldn't stop road or drive side hedges being cut from both the safety and visual aspects but for the majority of hedges it would have two major benefits: it would take less time (and hence cost) and it would benefit wildlife! However, whatever pattern of cutting is adopted, "all hedges, except perhaps holly, will need laying or coppicing sooner or later because they will become thin at the base. This is the best form of long-term management" (Devon's hedges: Conservation and management, Devon County Council / Devon Hedge Group).

Once it was realised nationally that many thousands of kilometres of hedgerow were being lost annually and that something ought to be done about it, the Hedgerow Regulations (made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995) were introduced in England and Wales in 1997 to protect them. The Regulations are intended to prevent the removal of most countryside hedgerows without first submitting a hedgerow removal notice to the local planning authority. The local planning authorities are only able to

require the retention of 'important' hedgerows. The Regulations then set out criteria to be used by the local authority in determining which hedgerows are important (Bickmore, 2002).

In such a clearly agricultural landscape, the hedgerows and hedgebanks represent continuity as features in the landscape and provide a significant wildlife resource at a time when the fields themselves are being more intensively used. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK Steering Group, 1995) lists ancient and or species-rich hedgerows as one of its priority habitats.

Various definitions of species-rich hedges have been used in different parts of the country but it would not be unreasonable to treat a hedge that has five or more woody species in a 30 metre length as a 'species-rich' one.

Hedgerows are often an essential corridor for the movement of wildlife and may support many animals and plants. Most of the hedgerows around Belstone parish are traditional hedges built on banks either faced with stone or just earth and containing a good variety of woody species, typically including oak, hazel, hawthorn, ash and holly (in places frequent) with mature standing trees of either oak (English) or ash. As many of the lanes are narrow and there is evidence of medieval stip fields around the village of Belstone and around Priestacott and Tor Down it is quite probable that many of the hedges in the parish are medieval. Larger fields in many parts of the parish probably indicate that there has been extensive hedgerow loss in recent years.

Species-rich hedges are listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a habitat of conservation concern in Devon. Many of the hedges along the lanes of Belstone would be classified as species-rich. The hedges also provide sheltered corridors though areas of farmland, they link copses and woodlands and probably support a good variety of invertebrates.



Most hedges in the Parish are species-rich and ancient. Many are 2m wide as shown here.

Unimproved grassland

Flower-rich meadows and pastures are a habitat of conservation concern in Devon and are listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as well as the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan**. Unimproved neutral grassland habitat has undergone a huge decline in the 20th century, almost entirely due to changing agricultural practice. It is estimated that by 1984 in lowland England and Wales, semi-natural grassland had declined by 97% over the previous 50 years to approximately 0.2 million ha.

Unimproved grassland is often very flower-rich and as a result of this attracts an abundance of butterflies and other invertebrates. The rich insect life in turn attracts bats such as the greater horseshoe bat and birds such as the green woodpecker and curlew. In Belstone, due to the high frequency of low-intensity farming, small fields and lots of wet valleys as well as the commons and greens around the village there is a lot of species-rich grassland. Although some have been identified there is scope to audit the grasslands further especially in areas that are not intensively managed. A species-rich grassland in the valley running south from Priestacott and a wet meadow at Moor Plot was found during the survey and chamomile lawns were dotted around the Parish where the grass is closely cropped. These have been identified as Common Land and Section 3 Moorland by DNPA but further survey is needed to identify species-rich unimproved grassland. Several areas of MG5 and MG6 grassland and haymeadows have already been identified in the Parish by DNPA to the east of Belstone village.

Upland Oak woodland

Upland Oak woodland is a habitat of conservation concern in Devon as well as being listed on the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan**. Upland semi-natural woods have declined by about 30-40% in area over the last 59-60 years as a result of replanting, mainly with introduced conifers, clearance for quarries or other developments in some areas, and from conversion to rough grazings. Woodlands are also under threat from the spread of invasive species such as rhododendron, cherry laurel and Japanese knotweed, which shade out the native ground flora. In Belstone Cleave/Skeigh Woods there is some Rhododendron and a couple of colonies of Japanese Knotweed have established.

Upland oakwoods are often rich in ferns, mosses, lichens and liverworts as well as holding rare breeding birds such as the wood warbler, redstart and pied flycatcher. Various lichens have been identified on the trees including 'string-of-sausages' *Usnea articulata* and 'oak moss' *Evernia prunastri*. Halstock Wood and part of Skaigh Wood are classified as ancient oak woodland.

Churchyard

The grassland in the churchyard is species poor and regularly mown. It may be possible to identify corners of the graveyard that could be left unmown for the summer to allow grasses and flowering plants to flower. Wild flower plugs or seeds could be used to increase the diversity of flowering plants here.

Some of the older gravestones have extensive lichen growths on them and these should not be scraped or washed off. A lichen expert should be able to give you a species list and identify any rarities. Lichens are very slow-growing and are dependant on pure unpolluted air.

Stone walls

No specific survey was carried out on the stone walls in the Parish but they will support various lichens, mosses and flowering plants as well as being of value to invertebrates and reptiles. Many of the hedgebanks on the higher ground around Belstone were stone faced and topped with beech trees whilst on the moorland itself many of the enclosures are stone walls. Garden walls and houses may also harbour interesting wildlife.

Recreation areas and public open space

As there are no major settlements in the Parish the only public open spaces are open access land including the moorland, parts of Belstone Cleave, Brenamoor Common and Tongue End; and a cricket field. The cricket field is over-managed by mowing and biodiversity could be increased by allowing an unmown grass margin which would encourage wild flowers, insects and small

mammals and in turn kestrels, owls and other birds and mammals. The hedges are also over-trimmed and would benefit from relaxing the management regime to cutting every 2-3 years instead of every year.

There are several major trails that pass through the Parish:

Tarka Trail:

180 miles in a figure-of-eight in the northern part of Devon based on Barnstaple; a stretch of the route makes use of the Tarka Line railway; the Trail follows the route taken by Tarka the Otter in the book of that name; generally comprehensively waymarked. Passes through numerous towns, including Barnstaple, Bideford, Torrington, Hatherleigh, Okehampton, Lynmouth and Ilfracombe.

A great variety of landscapes, including wooded river valleys, rugged moorland, coastal cliffs and sandy bays can be seen en route. Within the Parish it passes up the East Okement River through Halstock Woods SSSI with its associated oak woodland wildlife and where otters have been recorded. It then passes through Belstone and east along the River Taw through Belstone Cleave.

Dartmoor Way:

90 miles around Dartmoor; the route is currently not waymarked. Passes through numerous small towns and villages, including Okehampton, Chagford, Moretonhampstead, Buckfastleigh, Princetown and Tavistock.

A variety of Dartmoor scenery, including wild upland, sheltered valleys and quiet lanes can be experienced. In the Parish the path runs down small lanes in the north west and joins with the Tarka Trail at Belstone.

Gardens

Gardens are a haven for wildlife and can provide links to other areas of wildlife habitat. Several species have been recorded from gardens in Belstone parish including common woodland birds and mammals. Reptiles such as slow worms and common lizard and amphibians such as common frogs and common toads may well be finding a refuge in gardens but no records currently exist.

Roadside verges

Although many of the lanes have hedgerows right up to the edge in places there were verges or open areas adjacent to the road (e.g. Brenamoor Common).

Roadside verges often support flower-rich grassland, as well as a variety of semi-natural habitats including calcareous grassland, neutral grassland, acid grassland, heathland, open water (ditches), broadleaved woodland, scrub, hedgerows and walls. They may also support populations of scarce or declining species of flora and/or fauna, some of which enjoy statutory protection. Linear grassland habitats provide a valuable wildlife resource. Verges provide shelter and food for a variety of species from small mammals, to birds of prey and insects.

Devon has a very substantial resource of roadside verges; approximately 14,000 km of roads, corresponding to about 2,000 ha of roadside verge. However, of this very large resource, the area which is species-rich is relatively small and localised in distribution.

Devon County Council and Highways Agency manage roadside verges to incorporate prescriptions to maintain or enhance wildlife interests. DCC operate a **Special Verge Scheme** to manage areas of particular wildlife or amenity value. These verges are protected from damaging activities, and grass cutting is limited to specific periods to avoid the destruction of attractive stands of wildflowers.

Green lanes

A green lane can be defined as an unmetalled track with field boundaries either side. These boundaries may be banks, hedges, woodland edge, stone walls or fences and often features such as ditches or streams are incorporated within the lanes. The combination of the track, its boundaries and associated features create a landscape unit with its own microclimate and ecology. These sheltered conditions within lanes are of great importance to butterfly populations and may be more botanically species-rich than single hedge boundaries. There are some green lanes around Higher Sticklepath and Greehill to the east of the Parish and these are dedicated as bridlepaths. Traditional hedges line the lanes and support wild flowers such as primrose, red campion and navelwort.

Wet woodland

Wet woodland is a **UK Biodiversity Action Plan** habitat and is also listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan**.

Wet woodland occurs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils, usually with alder, birch and willows as the predominant tree species, but sometimes including ash, oak, pine and beech on the drier riparian areas. It is found on floodplains, as successional habitat on fens, mires and bogs, along streams and hillside flushes, and in peaty hollows. These woodlands occur on a range of soil types including nutrient-rich mineral and acid, nutrient-poor organic ones.

Wet woodland supports a rich lichen flora as well as a diverse invertebrate flora. Such an abundance of insect food attracts an interesting assemblage of breeding birds including willow warbler and the uncommon willow tit which has been recorded in the Parish. Wet woodland may also provide lying up areas for otters and suitable habitat for dormice. In the Parish there are small areas of wet willow woodland at Priestacott, Brennamoor Common and Belstone Cleave. Other areas may also be found elsewhere on private land.

Pits, quarries and cuttings:

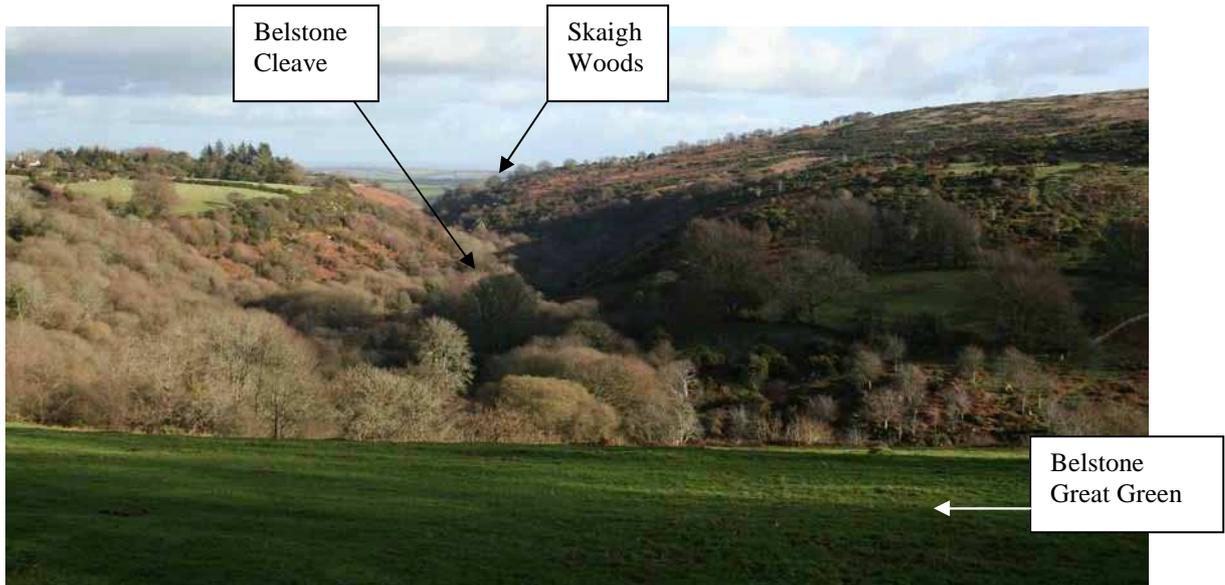
Pits, quarries and cuttings are listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as habitats of conservation concern in Devon. The numerous working pits and quarries in Devon are used for the extraction of a variety of minerals and are of great importance to the local and national economy. The pits and quarries are also of importance for the varied wildlife they support. Uncommon species of bird such as the peregrine falcon and raven may use the quarry edges to nest, greater and lesser horseshoe bats roost in cave-like quarries and reptiles such as common lizard and adder may be found basking in sunny areas in many quarries. There are two small disused quarries near Sticklepath on the extreme eastern boundary of the Parish. This is currently secondary woodland.

Potential County Wildlife Sites

There are at least 3 potential County Wildlife Sites in Belstone parish identified during the survey. These are sites identified as having possible interest but not fully surveyed. Some of these sites will be areas of significant wildlife interest and some are adjacent to existing designated areas. Other areas of importance may also exist.

Belstone Cleave/Belstone Great Green

Belstone Cleave is an area of scrub woodland with some more mature areas as well as patches of wet woodland and moorland. Bracken on sunny slopes supports pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies. Clean air allows 'string-of-sausages' and 'oak moss' lichens to thrive. Belstone Great Green and grassy patches in the Cleave are herb rich and worth further survey in the summer. Anthills, often the sign of undisturbed grassland, were found on grassland in the Cleave. Wet areas, where water collects, supports wetland plants such as fool's watercress, opposite leaved golden saxifrage and marsh thistle. Records of silver-washed fritillary, high brown fritillary and brown hairstreak butterflies as well as otter, pipistrelles, long-eared bats and lesser horseshoe bats exist for this area. The adjacent Skaigh Wood supports dormice so it is likely that they also exist here.



Belstone Cleave is secondary woodland on moorland edge and is home to a diversity of plants and animals and directly connected to Skaigh Woods.

Brenamoor Common

Common land in Belstone which is moorland with European gorse and some heathers as well as patches of acid grassland with tormentil and in places chamomile. A large pond, recently cleared of excess reeds has good potential for dragonflies and there are records of grass snake and palmate newt. Further survey during the summer would give a better idea of species present.



Brenamoor Common in Belstone – moorland with pond and acid grassland.

Priestacott

Combination of oak woodland, wet woodland, species-rich grassland and wet meadow in a small valley. Grassland includes knapweed, angelica, marsh orchid, meadowsweet and marsh thistle. Woodland has mature oak trees and ancient woodland indicators such as sanicle, primrose, wood sorrel, scaly male fern and common cow wheat.



Rushy pasture adjacent to woodland forms a diverse mosaic of habitats.

Woodland north of West Cleave (adjacent Halstock Woods)

Not surveyed during the site visit due to time constraints this woodland is situated on the opposite bank of the East Okement River to Halstock Wood. Almost certainly of similar quality and probably supports similar species to Halstock e.g. pied flycatchers, lichens and possibly dormice.

Other

Other areas such as the haymeadows, MG5 and MG6 grasslands and Section 3 grassland and moorland could also be designated further. Tongue End, a small piece of common land in the north of the Parish, is rather scrubbed up and in need of some management. This site is one of the best in the Parish for bluebells, however these could be lost if scrub becomes too dense.

In addition, the wetlands in the West Cleave are of considerable interest, featuring colobies of small pearl-bordered fritillary and pale butterwort.

Species

Important Species

A report from the DBRC database showing what legally protected, locally notable or noteworthy (eg Japanese Knotweed) species are known to have been present in and around Belstone Parish has been prepared and is presented separately (Appendix 1). A brief outline is given here.

Birds

Although no records are currently held by Devon Biodiversity Records Centre several species of birds were recorded during the survey and additional bird lists were provided by local recorders Andrew Terry and Mark Blacksell and are given in Appendix 2.

Lists of garden birds and birds seen in the woodland and on the moors will greatly add to our knowledge of the wildlife in the Parish and although this is a comprehensive list there may be other species present which are yet unrecorded.

On the day of the survey large flocks of redwing were feeding on berries in Belstone Cleave. Mark Blacksell reports a kingfisher has been seen in the last twelve months on the lake in Birchy Lake cleave. Ring ouzels were seen on migration on the rowan trees in Taw Marsh and one nested last year (2005). Grey wagtails are regularly seen with one nesting in a drainpipe at Tawcroft. Siskins are also abundant. Woodcock are always to be found in winter around Birchy Lake. A red kite has been seen several times over the village, one was seen in spring 2005 circling over Taw Marsh.

Peregrine, the occasional merlin and migrating marsh harrier have been seen. Willow tits are found in the Taw valley and pied flycatchers in all the oak woods. Birds used the nest boxes in Preistacott Woods and at Tawcroft with redstarts in a box at Tawcroft. There is always a flock of golden plover on Belstone Tor in the winter. Reed buntings nest on the river bank in Taw Marsh, as well as snipe. Birds sighted on the moor in Belstone include Buzzard, Raven, Wheatear, Stonechat, Meadow Pipit and Skylark.

Skylark:

The skylark is listed on the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan** as a species of conservation concern. The UK breeding population of skylark on lowland farmland has declined by 54% between 1969 and 1991. Considerable research in recent years has indicated that the most likely cause of the decline is the increase in the winter-sowing of cereals, which restricts opportunities for late-season nesting attempts because of vegetation height, and may reduce overwinter survival by reducing the area of stubbles.

Plants

Plant species noted on a visit on the 9th December 2006 are listed in Appendix 2.

Chamomile has been recorded on Brenamoor Common and was seen on Belstone Great Green during the survey. Ancient woodland indicators such as bluebells, primroses, sanicle, scaly male fern and common cow wheat were found in the woods. Wet meadows had soft rush, meadowsweet, wild angelica and marsh thistle. Heathers and gorses were present on the commons and open moorland.

Bluebell:

Wild bluebells are protected in Britain with respect to sale under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Classified as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species of conservation concern, although not a priority species. Bluebells can be found in the common land at Tongue End, Halstock Woods, in the older hedgerows and in Belstone Cleave below Skaigh House.

Primrose:

The primrose is listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as it is intended to help to raise public awareness of the need to conserve commonplace and characteristic elements of Devon's countryside. The primrose is not rare in Devon, but it may act as an indicator species to the health of Devon's environment, and by conserving the primrose, we may help to conserve some of the habitats in which it is found. These include woodlands, hedges, road verges and churchyards.

Japanese Knotweed has been recorded in several places in the Parish, two colonies in gardens but it is noted that small colonies have now established on the banks of the River Taw in Belstone Cleave. A separate section on this topic is included in page 29 of this report.

Rhododendron ponticum is prolific in places, a remnant of plantings in the 19th and early 20th centuries in gardens and woodlands previously in private hands, notably in Belstone Cleave opposite Skaigh Woods and on Belstone Common. This species, if left unmanaged, can become dominant in woodlands and on moorland and cause a great deal of loss of biodiversity. With no known native grazers (mammals or insects), its propensity to produce heavy shade which causes ground flora to decline, as well as its ability to produce toxic chemicals which make it difficult for other plant species to re-colonise, this plant is one that needs to be managed by systematic removal and follow-up spraying. DNPA management plans are helping to eradicate this plant using herbicides but the process is far from complete.

Mammals

Several mammal species have been recorded in Belstone parish. These include:

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre:

Badger
Brown long-eared bat
Common pipistrelle bat
Dormouse
Lesser horseshoe bat
Otter
Weasel

Local Recorders (Andrew Terry):

Bank vole
Common shrew
Fox
Grey squirrel
Pygmy shrew
Rabbit
Roe deer
Stoat
Wood mouse

Dormouse:

The dormouse is listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a species of Conservation concern in Devon.

Nationally, the dormouse has experienced a marked contraction in range in recent decades, and has become extinct in up to seven counties where it occurred in the last century, representing about half of its former range.

In Devon, the dormouse appears to be holding its own, and the County is now a major stronghold for the species. However, no detailed quantification of population change has been possible, due to lack of comparable data over time. Having said this, indirect evidence, from the losses of hedgerow length and declines in quality of hedgerows and woodlands that have occurred in the County over the past few decades, indicates that dormice have probably declined in a similar fashion. Dormice have been recorded in Skaigh Wood and are therefore probably present in Belstone Cleave as well as many of the hedgerows in the Parish. They are almost certainly found in Halstock Wood and connected woodlands in that area.

Otters:

Formerly widespread throughout the UK, the otter underwent a rapid decline in numbers from the 1950s to 1970s and was effectively lost from midland and south-eastern counties of England by the 1980s. Populations remain in Wales, south-west England and much of Scotland, where sea loch and coastal colonies comprise one of the largest populations in Europe. There is also a significant population of otters in Northern Ireland. The decline now appears to have halted and sightings are being reported in former habitats. Devon has an internationally important otter population and otters are now found on most watercourses and wetlands throughout the County. Otters are even now recolonising areas where they were thought to have been lost during the 60s and 70s. The main serious threat to otters today is from road kills, with many animals sadly reported dead each year.

The otter is listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a species of conservation concern. Otters have been recorded on the River Taw in Belstone Cleave/Skaigh Wood and Halstock Woods.

Bats:

All species of British bat are protected under UK law and International law. This makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take a bat, or to damage, obstruct or destroy any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection. Brown long-eared, common pipistrelle and both greater and lesser horseshoe bats have been recorded in Belstone Parish.

The pipistrelle is Britain's smallest and most common bat. They vary in colour, but are usually medium to dark brown on the back and only slightly paler underneath. They are the most common species in towns. Only very recently have scientists recognised that two separate species have been confused under the name *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Their flight appears fast and jerky as they dodge about pursuing small insects, which are caught and eaten in flight. A single pipistrelle may consume up to 3000 insects in a night.



Belstone Village - old buildings and barns could be home to bats.

Buildings are the most favoured roost sites for this species and more than half of known roosts are in buildings less than 30 years old. Pipistrelles prefer to roost in very confined spaces around the outside of the building, typical sites being behind hanging tiles, weather boarding, soffit and barge or eaves boarding, between roofing felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls. Pipistrelles rarely enter roof spaces except in the more stable, well-established large colonies found particularly in older buildings.

Due to the large number of old buildings and barns associated with nearby woodland the area to the east of Belstone village between Belstone and Sticklepath is worth surveying for bats. It is known that 3 species live at Skaigh House but bats are almost certainly under-recorded in the parish. Halstock Wood may well be home to the rare barbastelle bat and many of the old barns and buildings could harbour horseshoe bats.

Invertebrates

Due to the time of year little invertebrate life was seen during the survey. Records held by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre for the Parish show a good diversity of the rarer butterflies including silver-washed fritillary, high brown fritillary (UKBAP), pearl-bordered fritillary, dark green fritillary, purple hairstreak and green hairstreak. Keeled skimmer dragonfly has also been recorded in the Parish (Dartmoor National Park data), again dragonflies are no doubt under-recorded.

Other butterfly species recorded in the parish include (Andrew Terry):

Brimstone
Clouded yellow
Comma
Common blue
Gatekeeper
Grayling
Large skipper
Large white
Marbled white
Marsh fritillary (just once - clearly vagrant)
Meadow brown
Painted lady
Peacock
Red admiral
Ringlet
Small copper
Small heath
Small pearl-bordered fritillary
Small tortoiseshell
Speckled wood
Wall

Moth species recorded (Andrew Terry):

Chimney sweeper
Hummingbird hawkmoth
Puss moth
Six-spot burnet
Small elephant hawk moth

Pearl-bordered fritillary:

The pearl-bordered fritillary is listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a species of conservation concern in Devon; it is also a **UK Biodiversity Action Plan** priority species. The small pearl-bordered fritillary and brown hairstreak are also listed on the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan**.

The pearl-bordered fritillary is a butterfly of woodland clearings, usually in recently coppiced or clear-felled woodland and well-drained habitats with mosaics of grass, dense bracken, and light scrub. In all habitats it requires abundant foodplants growing in short, sparse vegetation, where there is abundant leaf litter. The most widely used foodplant is common dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) although it can use other violets such as heath dog-violet (*V. canina*) and marsh violet (*V. palustris*).

The pearl-bordered fritillary has declined rapidly in recent decades, and Devon is now considered a national stronghold for the species.

South-facing bracken-covered slopes like those in Belstone Cleave are good places for fritillary butterflies and sympathetic management will help them colonise. Regular swaling is carried out but if too frequent this can have a detrimental effect on fritillary populations.



South-facing bracken slopes in Belstone Cleave good for fritillary butterflies.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Due to the time of year no amphibians or reptiles were seen during the survey.

However, data shows that grass snake and palmate newt have been recorded in the pond at Brenamoor Common. There are local records of adders and common lizards. Slow worms are present in both gardens and amenity areas and on the open moor.

Again, local sightings show frogs and toads to be frequent in the Parish, and common newts are also present.

Fish

Atlantic salmon have been recorded in the East Okement River and River Taw.

The Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* is the largest European member of its family, and in Devon waters males may reach 10 kg in weight (females are slightly smaller on average). The salmon has fascinating migratory habits, uses most of Devon's rivers in which to spawn and also occurs in our estuaries and other coastal waters during its migratory phase. It spends time as a juvenile in fresh waters, grows to adulthood at sea, returns to coastal waters in the spring and summer, moves upstream into our rivers throughout the year, and spawns during the winter months. The salmon is an indicator of very high river quality and they require the clean gravels of fast-flowing rivers to spawn.

Atlantic salmon is listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a species of conservation concern in Devon.

Brown trout are also present.

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) describes the key actions needed to look after 37 of Devon's most important habitats and species. It does not stand alone, but is part of a much wider process aimed at conserving our biodiversity.

The Devon BAP is a direct descendent of a process started at the famous 'Earth Summit' held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At this summit, world leaders pledged to halt and reverse the loss of the planet's biodiversity. For its part, the UK government produced a series of Action Plans for a great many threatened habitats and species. These national plans have been joined by a series of regional Action Plans aimed at providing a more local perspective.

The Devon BAP builds on this endeavour, identifying local priorities and providing targets and plans of action for the County. It is joined by a number of other local BAPs, including the **Dartmoor BAP**. The Dartmoor BAP has a number of habitat and species action plans for many important upland features which, due to their specific geographical location, are not covered in detail in the Devon BAP.

All of this work has one aim: to encourage practical action on the ground. Its success depends upon us all.

Biodiversity links:

- The Devon BAP can be viewed at www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity. This site also contains links to other nature conservation issues relevant to Devon, such as information on hedges. If you do not have access to the internet and require paper copies of relevant sections of the Devon BAP please contact Devon County Council's Biodiversity Officer on 01392 382804.
- The Dartmoor BAP can be viewed here: <http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/au-baptoc>.
- Details of biodiversity planning in the South West region can be viewed at www.swbiodiversity.org.uk.
- National Action Plans can be viewed at www.ukbap.org.uk. This site also contains useful background information on UK biodiversity action planning.

Links between the wildlife of Belstone and the Devon and Dartmoor BAPs:

Belstone wildlife feature	Brief description of feature	Link with the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan	Links with the Dartmoor Biodiversity Action Plan
North Dartmoor moorland	Upland moorland with extensive blanket bog and breeding birds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pearl-bordered Fritillary Species Action Plan • (Curlew Species Action Plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moorland Habitat Action Plan • High Brown and pearl-bordered fritillaries Species Action Plan
East Okement River and River Taw	Fast-flowing rivers with rocky or gravel beds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers, streams, floodplain and fluvial processes Habitat Action Plan • Alder/Willow wet woodland Habitat Action Plan • Otter Species Action Plan • Atlantic Salmon Species Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshwater Habitat Action Plan
Halstock Woods and Skaigh Woods	Areas of ancient semi-natural oak woodland associated with river valleys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oak Woodland Habitat Action Plan • Alder/Willow wet woodland Habitat Action Plan • Dormouse Species Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland Habitat Action Plan • Mosses, lichens and ferns Species Action Plan
Traditional hedgerows in farmland in north of the Parish	Extensive ancient hedgerows with possible remnants of medieval strip field systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species-rich Hedges Habitat Action Plan • Dormouse Species Action Plan • Primrose Species Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field boundaries and isolated trees Habitat Action Plan • Dormouse Species Action Plan
Disused quarries near Sticklepath	Disused quarries on western edge of Sticlepath now secondary woodland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pits, quarries and cuttings Habitat Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rocks (incl. tors, clutter slopes, quarries, caves, mines and buildings) Habitat Action Plan

Species rich grasslands in Taw and East Okement valleys, around Priestacott and moorland edges.	Species-rich grassland, wet meadows and haymeadows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flower-rich meadows and pastures Habitat Action Plan • Primrose Species Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haymeadows and species-rich dry pastures Habitat Action Plan
---	---	--	--

In addition, many of these features will provide will provide valuable habitat for bats, and are relevant to the Dartmoor BAP's Bat Species Action Plan.

View the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan at www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity

Visit the Dartmoor Biodiversity Action Plan at <http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/au-baptoc>

Some Ideas for Local Action...

This section of the report is provided by Devon County Council (contact: nature@devon.gov.uk).

A major step to knowing what you can do for your local wildlife and geology is to know what you have already got. This report will help you in this, but it is just a start.

Ultimately, the protection and enhancement of the local natural environment requires the interest and enthusiasm of the local community.

There follow some initial ideas for local nature conservation action. Many of them will directly help to achieve the objectives of the habitat and species action plans contained in the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan**.

It is by no means an exhaustive list. As a community, you may have many more ideas for action that you would like to take forward in the coming years.

1 Further survey:

This report is just a beginning. Carrying out further survey within your area will help build a better picture of the wildlife present, and of the opportunities for enhancement. Gaining a better understanding of the resource is usually a key objective of the Devon BAP's habitat and species action plans.

A bat survey, especially in Belstone Cleave and Skaigh Woods and around the village of Belstone where there are lots of old buildings, should help build up a picture of bats in the Parish. This may contribute to the **Greater Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan** if they are found to be present and pipistrelles are a UKBAP species.

You might also include a dormouse nut hunt in the autumn to establish which woodlands have dormice and this would contribute to the **Dormouse Species Action Plan**. DNPA's *Action for Wildlife* can give advice on how to do this.

One example of survey work that might usefully be undertaken would be to produce a hedgerow appraisal for your local area. Comparing the current distribution of hedges against boundary lines shown on old maps will give a clue as to how this important resource has changed over recent years. It may also highlight opportunities for restoring hedges in your area. It might also be possible to assess the condition of hedges and this may, in turn, give some ideas about improving their future management to benefit wildlife. This would directly contribute to the **Species-rich Hedgerows Habitat Action Plan**.

Survey work could be undertaken as a community group or in liaison with conservation groups active in the area. For example, the Dartmoor National Park's Ranger and *Action for Wildlife* may be able to help with surveys or active conservation projects.

Help to build up a picture of the state of Devon's environment by sending your records to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre where they can be properly collated. As you are within Dartmoor National Park you should also give records to DNPA. DNPA's *Action for Wildlife* for instance is compiling records of dormice and Japanese knotweed but collect records of any other wildlife on Dartmoor.

2 Influence the management of Public Open Space:

Creating areas of more species-rich grassland will help to reduce the isolation of the remaining fragments of traditionally managed agricultural land, contributing to the **Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan**. Churchyards have often received less intensive management than the surrounding land and can provide good opportunities for wildlife.

Planting up areas that are currently of little wildlife interest with new copses of native trees and shrubs will also help to attract wildlife. Suitable sites might include unused areas of playing fields, for example. Seek advice before doing any tree planting as to the suitability of the chosen site.

3 Build relationships with local landowners:

Encourage the adoption of more wildlife-friendly land management. For example, hedges which are cut only every other year will provide an autumn and winter source of nuts and berries for birds and small mammals (and can save the landowner money in management costs). The improved management of hedgerows is a key objective of the **Species-rich Hedges Action Plan**. If the owner is willing, why not get involved with practical management, such as traditional hedge laying or pond restoration?

4 Adopt a road verge:

Many verges can have a significant value for wildlife because they have escaped the intensive management of the surrounding farmland. Ensuring such verges are managed for their wildlife is a very positive step, again contributing to the **Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan**.

There are, of course, obvious health and safety implications to roadside management. It is an action that would need to be undertaken in close liaison with the relevant highways authority (generally, this is the Highways Agency for motorways and trunk roads, and Devon County Council for all other roads).

5 Wildlife gardening:

Green up your garden! Collectively the gardens of Belstone represent a significant area that could be used to benefit wildlife. Large or small, you can turn your garden (or a part of it) into a haven for wildlife. A very good source of information on wildlife gardening is the Natural England web site:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/Nature_In_The_Garden

Natural England is the Government's adviser on nature conservation. Its web site also contains links to a number of other very useful sources of information.

6 Join local conservation organisations:

Examples of prominent local conservation organisations are the Devon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society and the Woodland Trust. These organisations have a number of Local Groups which, amongst other things, get involved in practical management work.

7 Japanese Knotweed:

Not something to cherish, but it can't be ignored! Unfortunately Japanese Knotweed is present in several locations in Belstone, in two gardens and in a couple of places in Belstone Cleave alongside the River Taw. Introduced into Britain by the Victorians, Japanese Knotweed is a native of Japan, north China, Korea and Taiwan. It flourishes in Britain's mild and fertile environment and has no natural biological enemies here. Consequently, it is very invasive and can overrun large areas, replacing our native flora. It is a serious pest which can be so vigorous as to cause significant damage to buildings and roads. It is also a difficult plant to eradicate.

For these reasons Japanese Knotweed is listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as a plant that is not to be planted or otherwise introduced into the wild. In addition, all parts of the plant are considered as controlled waste under the Waste Regulations.

What can you do?

- Firstly, it is important to build up a picture of where Japanese Knotweed is present. This will give an idea of the scale of the problem and will help to prevent it being accidentally spread during any ditch clearance, highway work and so on. To help develop an understanding of the problem in Devon, records should also be sent to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre¹ and Dartmoor National Park Authority. Ideally, records should

¹ DBRC, Shirehampton House, 35-37 St David's Hill, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4DA. Phone: 01392 273244; Fax: 01392 433221; E-mail: dbrc@devonwt.cix.co.uk

include when you first saw it and confirmation of when it was seen most recently; its precise location (notes or a sketch map are helpful, as is a grid reference if you have one); the kind of habitat it is in (e.g. next to running water, on a road verge), and a rough indication of how abundant it is.

- Secondly, be careful not to spread the plant further! This is all too easily done as it can regenerate from even the smallest fragment and is easy to spread unknowingly. It is important not to flail it or to try and dig it up. Often, it is best not to cut Japanese Knotweed at all, but if it is it should be very carefully disposed of on site when dead or removed as Controlled Waste. Any tools used should be properly cleaned.
- Finally, if Japanese Knotweed is on your land, the best way to prevent its spread is to control or eradicate it as soon as possible. Regular cutting can weaken and eventually kill the plant but it is a time-consuming job and proper disposal of the cut material can be a problem. Usually, the most effective method of control is to treat the plant with herbicide. This can take a number of years to be successful but if the plant is left untreated it will inevitably spread. A number of issues should be taken into account in deciding which herbicide to use, particularly the presence of water (where special care needs to be taken and the advice of the Environment Agency must be sought).

Fortunately, a great deal of advice (including an Environment Agency Code of Practice) is available on the Devon Knotweed Forum's web pages. You are recommended to view these at:

www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity/japanese_knotweed.

Useful sources of further information:

The following organisations can offer advice and information on various wildlife topics as well as organising events and carrying out projects.

- Devon Wildlife Trust: www.devonwildlifetrust.org
- Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society: Secretary tel: 01837 53360
- Dartmoor National Park Authority: Tel: 01626 832093
<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/>
- Natural England: www.naturalengland.org.uk
- Plantlife: www.plantlife.org.uk
- RSPB: www.rspb.org.uk
- The Woodland Trust: www.woodland-trust.org.uk

- The Living Churchyards & Cemeteries Project, Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Society, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ
Tel: 01203 696969 ext. 364/339.

In addition, Devon County Council has produced a Community Wildlife Toolkit which is available via the DCC web site (www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity). This toolkit aims to provide practical advice on management to encourage wildlife and, in particular, provides a central point from which to access the large amount of advice that is already available from a huge range of other organisations.

In addition to management advice, the toolkit provides guidance on seeking funding for project work.

Possible sources of funding:

A number of potential sources of funding are available for local biodiversity projects. Each has its own rules, criteria and objectives, and funding sources are sometimes only available for a limited period of time. However, the following may well be worth checking for suitability (not all will be applicable to your particular parish):

- Awards for All: National Lottery grants aimed at communities.
www.awardsforall.org.uk
- British Dragonfly Society: grants of £250 for pond building.
<http://www.dragonflysoc.org.uk/>
- Breathing Places: grants available for the creation of community green spaces. Distributed by the Big Lottery Fund.
<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes/breathingplaces/index.html>
- Countryside Trust Awards: 01242 521382 or www.countryside-trust.org
- Defra's Environmental Action Fund.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/eaf/>
- Defra: information about woodland grant schemes.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/wgs/default.htm>
- Enriching Nature Programme (SITA Trust): for biodiversity projects within 10 miles of a landfill site. http://www.sitatrust.org.uk/nature/apply_nature
- Esmée Fairburn Foundation: grant-giving trust for environmental projects.
<http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/programmes/env.html>

- Forestry Commission: grants and sources of funding available for improving biodiversity. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/hcou-4u4j28>
- Hanson Environmental Fund: if you live within 5 miles of a Hanson quarry. <http://www.hansonenvfund.org/welcome.php>
- Heritage Lottery Fund: various grants for different types of community projects. <http://www.hlf.org.uk/English/>
- Living Spaces: projects to enhance the environment of communities. 0845 600 3190 or www.living-spaces.org.uk.
- Local Heritage Initiative: 01226 719019 or www.lhi.org.uk.
- Tree Council: small grants for schools and communities for tree planting schemes. <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/>

For Belstone which is within Dartmoor National Park it may also be worth exploring if your project is eligible for support through the **Sustainable Development Fund**.

Bibliography

Bickmore CJ (2002) *Hedgerow Survey Handbook* Countryside Council for Wales

DCC & Devon Hedge Group (1997) *Devon's Hedges* Devon County Council and Devon Hedge Group

Devon Biodiversity Partnership (1998) *The Nature of Devon: A Biodiversity Action Plan*

Farrell I and Reay P (Eds) *Devon Bird Report 2002* (2003) No 75 Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society Okehampton

Rose F (1981) *The Wild Flower Key* Penguin Group London

UK Steering Group (1995) Biodiversity: *The UK Steering Group Report Vol 1 Meeting the Rio Challenge* HMSO London

UK Steering Group (1995) Biodiversity: *The UK Steering Group Report Vol 2 Action Plans* HMSO London

Appendix 1 – Notable sites and species within Belstone Parish.

File Code	Site Name	Grid Ref.	Area (ha)	Description	Status
SX58/003	North Dartmoor	SX58085 0	13561.0	One of the largest areas of upland semi-natural habitat in southern Britain, with western blanket bog, mixed valley mires, lichens & upland breeding birds	SSSI, SAC & Section 3 Moorland
SX69/036	Halstock Wood	SX60793 6	9.7	Upland sessile oakwood, supporting a wide range of plants and birds	SSSI
	Priestacott	SX61843 4	0.76	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	Tongue End	SX62494 7	2.57	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	Brenamoor	SX62293 8	6.98	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	Mowhay	SX63194 0	0.22	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	Moors Plot, Well Park	SX61793 4	0.98	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	Meer Pool, Tors Park	SX61593 7	0.13	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	West Cleave	SX60993 7	0731	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland

	Part Belstone Common	SX61392 1	239.82	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	East Cleave	SX62793 6	28.77	Belstone Common	Common land & DNP Section 3 Moorland
	Resugga	SX61893 0	2.42	Woodland	DNP Section 3 Woodland
	Skaigh Wood	SX63693 8	14.63	Woodland	DNP Section 3 Woodland
	Priestacott	SX61843 4	2.54	Woodland	DNP Section 3 Woodland
	Halstock Wood	SX60193 8	-	Woodland	DNP Section 3 Woodland
	Old Rectory Farm	SX61193 6	0.66	Woodland	DNP Section 3 Woodland
	MG6 close to MG5	SX 62493 6	1.04	Haymeadow	Grassland
	MG5c	SX63294 4	1.67	Haymeadow	Grassland
	U4;Others	SX60692 8	9.13	Grazed Permanent Grassland - three fields of enclosed moorland, upper slopes MG6/U4...towards river acid flora improves as does the abundance of Bracken. Third field has extensive wet flushes/mire system (M39, M23, M25,M21)	Grassland
	MG5a	SX61893 4	0.32	Grazed Permanent Grassland -small field, herbaceous sward. Partly given over to livestock	Grassland

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): these are notified by Natural England (was English Nature) because of their plants, animals or geological features (the latter are geological SSSIs or gSSSI). Natural England (was English Nature) needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SSSI is a statutory designation with legal implications.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC): these are notified by Natural England (was English Nature) because they contain species and/or habitats of European importance (listed in the Habitats Directive 1994), and are part of a network of conservation sites set up through Europe known as the Natura 2000 series. On land, almost all candidate SACs are, or will be notified as SSSIs. Natural England (was English Nature) needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SAC is a statutory designation with legal implications.

NVC Community MG5 (*Cynosurus cristatus* - *Centaurea nigra* grassland): The *Centaureo-Cynosuretum* is a dictyledon-rich grassland of somewhat variable appearance: it may have a tight, low-growing sward or comprise a fairly lush growth up to 60cm tall. The most frequent grasses are the fine-leaved *Festuca rubra*, *Cynosurus cristatus* and *Agrostis capillaries*.

NVC Community MG6 (*Lolium perenne* - *Cynosurus cristatus* grassland): The *Lolio-Cynosuretum* generally has a short, tight sward which is grass-dominated. *Lolium perenne* is usually the most abundant grass with varying amounts of *Cynosurus cristatus*.

NVC Community U4 (*Festuca ovina* - *Agrostis capillaris* – *Gallium saxatile* grassland): The *Festuca ovina* - *Agrostis capillaris* – *Gallium saxatile* grassland is characteristically dominated by grass mixtures in which *Festuca ovina*, *Agrostis capillaries* and *Anthoxanthum odoratum* are the most consistent and generally the most abundant components.

Dartmoor National Park Section 3 Moorland and Heath: Please contact the Dartmoor National Park Authority for a detailed explanation and description of these.

County Wildlife Sites (CWS): these are sites of county importance for wildlife, designated on the basis of the habitat or the known presence of particular species. This is not a statutory designation like SSSIs, and does not have any legal status. County Wildlife Sites are usually included in Local Plans as sites of substantive nature conservation interest and are covered by Planning Policy Guidance note nine (PPG9). CWS recognition does not demand any particular actions on the part of the Landowner and does not give the public rights of access. However, it may increase eligibility for land management grants.

Potential County Wildlife Sites / Unconfirmed County Wildlife Sites (pCWS or Unc): these are sites identified as having possible interest but not fully surveyed. Some of these sites will be areas of significant wildlife interest.

Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI): Ancient Woodland is a term applied to woodlands which have existed from at least Medieval times to the present day without ever having been cleared for uses other than wood or timber production. A convenient date used to separate ancient and secondary woodland is about the year 1600. In special circumstances semi-natural woods of post-1600 but pre-1900 origin are also included. The Devon Ancient Woodland Inventory was prepared in 1986 by the Nature Conservancy Council.

No.	Name	Latin Name	Location	Date	Grid Ref.	UK Protection	International Protection	Status
1	Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Taw River, Belstone, Dartmoor.	2004	SX622934	WCA 5, 6	EC IVa; Bern III, Bonn II	UKBAP(P)
2	Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Skaigh House, Belstone, Okehampton.	2002	SX631939	WCA 5, 6	EC IVa; Bern II; Bonn II	
3	Lesser Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Skaigh House, Belstone, Okehampton.	2002	SX631939	WCA 5, 6	EC IIa, IVa; Bern II; Bonn II	UKBAP(P)
4	Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Skaigh House, Belstone, Okehampton.	2002	SX631939	WCA 5, 6	EC IVa; Bern III, Bonn II	UKBAP(P)
5	Common Dormouse	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	Skaigh Wood, Sticklepath, near Okehampton.	2001	SX637939	WCA 5, 6	EC IVa; Bern III	UKBAP(P); DBAP
6	High Brown Fritillary	<i>Argynnis adippe</i>	Skaigh	1992	SX6292	WCA 5		UKBAP(P); RDB2
7	Brown Hairstreak	<i>Thecla betulae</i>	Combe Head, Sticklepath	1998	SX623948	WCA 5 (S)		Nb
8	Brown Hairstreak	<i>Thecla betulae</i>	Belstone Cleave	1995	SX625935	WCA 5 (S)		Nb
9	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>	Belstone Cleave	1998	SX627937	WCA 5 (S)		UKBAP(P); DBAP; Nb
10	High Brown Fritillary	<i>Argynnis adippe</i>	Skaigh Valley	1992	SX637940	WCA 5		UKBAP(P); RDB2
11	Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Okement	1988	SX607941	WCA 5	EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II	UKBAP(P); DBAP
12	Weasel	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>	Road between Sticklepath and Okehampton	1999	SX619950		Bern III	

13	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Lane at Brenamoor Common	1999	SX621937	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
14	Japanese Knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Steeperton, Belstone, Okehampton	2002	SX622937	WCA 9		
15	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Near Okehampton	2001	SX625938	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
16	Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	Pond at Belstone, Okehampton	1998	SX627938	WCA 5(KIS)	Bern III	
17	Palmate Newt	<i>Triturus helveticus</i>	Pond at Belstone, Okehampton	1998	SX627938	WCA 5(S)	Bern III	
18	Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	River Taw	1987	SX6293	WCA 5	EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II	UKBAP(P); DBAP
19	Brown Hairstreak	<i>Thecla betulae</i>	Westlake	1998	SX604948	WCA 5 (S)		Nb
20	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>	Belstone Common	1997	SX613925			
21	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>	Near Okehampton	1992	SX613941			
22	Purple Hairstreak	<i>Quercusia quercus</i>	Near Okehampton	1992	SX613941			Decline
23	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>	Belstone	1995	SX616934			
24	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>	Skaigh Warren	1998 - 1999	SX6293			
25	Green Hairstreak	<i>Callophrys rubi</i>	Belstone Common	1996	SX629938			Decline
26	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>	Skaigh Warren	1992	SX6394			
27	Silver-washed	<i>Argynnis</i>	Skaigh Wood	1996	SX635939			

	Fritillary	paphia						
28	Dark Green Fritillary	Argynnis aglaja	Skaigh	1997	SX637939			Decline
29	High Brown Fritillary	Argynnis adippe	Skaigh	1997	SX637939	WCA 5		UKBAP(P); RDB2
30	Brown Long-eared	Plecotus auritus	Langmeads		SX619935	WCA 5, 6	EC IVa; Bern II; Bonn II	
31	Japanese Knotweed	Fallopia japonica	Old Rectory Farm, Belstone		SX611937	WCA 9		

WCA 5 **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 5:** species protected against killing, injury, disturbance and handling.

WCA 5 (S) **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 5: (sale):** species protected against sale only.

WCA 5 (KIS) **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 5: (killing & injury):** species protected against killing, injury and sale only.

WCA 6 **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 6:** animals (other than birds) which may not be killed or taken by certain methods

WCA 9 **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 9:** animals and plants for which release into the wild is prohibited.

BA **Protection of Badgers Act 1992:** badgers may not be deliberately killed, persecuted or trapped except under licence. Badger setts may not be damaged, destroyed or obstructed.

Bern II **Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) Appendix II:** Special protection for listed animal species and their habitats.

Bern III	Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) Appendix III: Exploitation of listed animal species to be subject to regulation
ECIIa, IIb	EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats & Species Directive) Annex IIa and IIb: Designation of protected areas for animal and plant species listed.
ECIIIa, IIIb	EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats & Species Directive) Annex IIIa and IIb: Species used as criteria for designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
ECIVa, IVb	EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats & Species Directive) Annex IVa: Exploitation of listed animals and plants to be subject to management if necessary.
Bonn II	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) Appendix II: Range states encouraged to conclude international agreements to benefit species listed.
UKBAP(P)	UK Priority Species (Short and Middle Lists - UK Biodiversity steering Group Report 1995) i.e. species that are globally threatened and rapidly declining in the UK (by more than 50% in the last 25 years). Has a Species Action Plan.
DBAP	Devon Biodiversity Action Plan species: these have been identified as species of key conservation concern in Devon.
Nb	Nationally Notable B: known from 100 or fewer 10km squares. Taken from the Invertebrate Site Register.
Decline	Substantial local decline in Devon
RDB2	Red Data Book 2: Vulnerable. Taxa believed likely to move into the endangered category in the near future if casual factors continue to operate. Includes taxa which are still abundant but are under threat from serious adverse factors throughout their range.

Appendix 2

Species lists for Belstone Parish, recorded during the field survey on 9th December 2006.

WILD FLOWERS

[Additional records forwarded by Andrew Terry shown in **bold**]

Common name	Scientific name
Angelica	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Bell heather	<i>Erica cinerea</i>
Betony	<i>Stachys officinalis</i>
Bilberry	<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>
Black medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>
Bog asphodel	<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>
Bog pimpernel	<i>Anagallis tenella</i>
Bog pondweed	<i>Potamegaton polygonifolious</i>
Bog stitchwort	<i>Stellaria alsine</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
Brooklime	<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>
Bugle	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
Bulbous buttercup	<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>
Bush vetch	<i>Vicia sepium</i>
Chamomile	<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Climbing corydalis	<i>Ceratocapnos claviculata</i>
Common Bird's-foot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Common cownheat	<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>
Common daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Common dog-violet	<i>Viola riviniana</i>
Common eyebright	<i>Euphrasia nemorosa</i>
Common field speedwell	<i>Veronica persica</i>
Common knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
Common marsh bedstraw	<i>Galium palustre var palustre</i>
Common milkwort	<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Common sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
Common vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Creeping jenny	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Crested dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>
Cross-leaved heath	<i>Erica tetralix</i>
Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Early purple orchid	<i>Orchis mascula</i>
Early forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis ramosissima</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Enchanters nightshade	<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>
English oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
English sticky eyebright	<i>Euphrasia anglica</i>
English stonecrop	<i>Sedum anglicum</i>
Fat hen	<i>Chenopodium album</i>
Feverfew	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>
Field forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>
Field pansy	<i>Viola arvensis</i>
Field rose	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>
Figwort, common	<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>
Fools watercress	<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Fumitory	<i>Fumaria officinalis</i>
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>
Germander speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Great willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>
Greater burdock	<i>Arctium lappa</i>
Greater celandine	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>
Greater stitchwort	<i>Stellaria holostea</i>
Ground elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Ground elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Ground ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
Hairy bitter-cress	<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crateagus monogyna</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Heath bedstraw	<i>Galium saxatile</i>
Heath milkwort	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>
Heath spotted orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>
Heather (ling)	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>
Hedge bedstraw	<i>Galium mollugo</i>
Hedge woundwort	<i>Stachys officinalis</i>
Herb bennet	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Himalayan knotweed*	<i>Persicaria wallichii</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Honesty	<i>Lunaria annua</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Ivy-leaved bellflower	<i>Wahlenbergia hederacea</i>
Ivy-leaved Toadflax	<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>
Large bindweed	<i>Calystegia silvatica</i>
Lesser celandine	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>
Lesser periwinkle	<i>Vinca minor</i>
Lesser stitchwort	<i>Stellaria graminea</i>
Lords-and-Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>
Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>
Marsh St John's-wort	<i>Hypericum elodes</i>
Marsh thistle	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>
Marsh thistle	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>
Marsh violet	<i>Viola palustris</i>
Mayweed	<i>Anthemis cotula</i>
Meadow buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
Mouse-ear hawkweed	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>
Mugwort	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>
Navelwort	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>
Nipplewort	<i>Lapsana communis</i>
Opposite-leaved golden saxifrage	<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>
Pale Butterwort	<i>Pinguicula lusitanica</i>
Pignut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>
Pink purslane*	<i>Claytonia sibirica</i>
Prickly sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Purple toadflax	<i>Linaria purpurea</i>
Ramsons	<i>Allium ursinum</i>
Raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>
Red campion	<i>Sylene dioica</i>
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Rosebay willowherb	<i>Epilobium angustifolium</i>
Rough chervil	<i>Chaerophyllum temulum</i>
Rough hawkbit	<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>
Round-leaved crowfoot	<i>Ranunculus omiophyllus</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Sand spurrey	<i>Spergularia rubra</i>
Sanicle	<i>Sanicula europea</i>
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Sheep'-bit	<i>Jasione montana</i>
Sheeps sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>
Shepherd's-purse	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>
Shining cranesbill	<i>Geranium lucidum</i>
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Slender St John's-wort	<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>
Snowberry*	<i>Symphoricarpos racemosus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Soft rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Stonecrop (English)	<i>Sedum anglicum</i>
Sun spurge	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>
Sundew	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>
Sweet woodruff	<i>Galium odoratum</i>
Sycamore*	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Tall mint	<i>Mentha x smithiana</i>
Teasel	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
Trailing St John's-wort	<i>Hypericum humifusum</i>
Tufted forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis laxa</i>
Tutsan	<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>
Watercress	<i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i>
Water-pepper	<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>
Wavy bitter-cress	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>
Western marsh orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i>
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Wild garlic	<i>Allium ursinum</i>
Wild strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>
Wild thyme	<i>Thymus polytrichus</i>
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Wood sage	<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>
Wood sorrel	<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Yellow flag	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>
Yellow rattle	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>

* Non-native species

FERNS

Common Name	Scientific name
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>
Hard fern	<i>Blechnum spicant</i>
Hart's tongue fern	<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>
Lady fern	<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>
Male fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Polypody	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>
Scaly male fern	<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>

LICHENS

Common Name	Scientific name
Oak moss	<i>Evernia prunastri</i>
String-of-sausages	<i>Usnea articulata</i>
	<i>Usnea cornuta</i>

BIRDS

Several species of birds were recorded during the survey and bird lists were provided by local recorders Andrew Terry and Mark Blacksell.

Common Name	Common Name
Robin	Starling
Nuthatch	Swallow
Wren	House martin
Coal tit	Tree creeper
Blue tit	Spotted flycatcher
Great tit	Pied flycatcher
Long-tailed tit	Chiffchaff
Willow tit	Willow warbler
Bullfinch	Reed bunting
Chaffinch	Blackcap
Greenfinch	Redstart
Goldfinch	Cuckoo
Siskin	Wood Pigeon
Green woodpecker	Collared dove
Great spotted woodpecker	Pied wagtail
Rook	Grey wagtail
Magpie	Dipper
Crow	Kingfisher
Raven	Grey heron
Jackdaw	Woodcock
Jay	Pheasant
House sparrow	Grey partridge
Duncock	Snipe
Goldcrest	Golden plover
Redwing	Sparrowhawk
Song thrush	Buzzard
Mistle thrush	Tawny owl
Ring ouzel	Merlin
Wheatear	Peregrine
Stonechat	Marsh harrier (migrant)
Meadow pipit	Red kite (migrant)
Skylark	

Also, the following birds are additional to those listed above.

They were seen by Belstone resident Chris Walpole (unless stated otherwise), mostly in the period between 1971 and 1990 when he kept detailed monthly bird distribution maps for the parish. The extreme rarities are given with the date(s) of sighting.

The full distribution map records are kept at *Little Gables*, Belstone, EX20 1RD.

Species	Location	Date
Mute swan	group of four flying down Belstone Cleave	14.1.1978
Canada goose	occasionally seen on Brenamoor Pond	
Mallard	seen fairly regularly on Brenamoor Pond	
Shoveller	female seen on Brenamoor Pond	18 – 22.9.1974
Mandarin duck	pair (escapees?) seen on Brenamoor Pond	16.4.1972
Rough-legged buzzard	seen over lower Belstone Cleave by Ruth Biggs	autumn 1999
Hen harrier	adult male seen at Belstone by W Walmesley White (as listed in the first volume of the Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society Yearbook)	1.5.1924
Hobby	seen at Belstone (as listed in the DBWPS Devon Bird Report for 2000)	13.5.2000
Kestrel	often seen 1971-90 hovering over the slopes of Belstone Tor; less common now	
Red-legged partridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nesting in garden at Belstone, seen by John White. • pair seen by Mark Blacksell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2002 • spring 2000
Quail	group of four seen in lower Belstone Cleave	6.8.1973
Water rail	seen on Brenamoor Common by John White	circa 1985
Moorhen	seen on Brenamoor Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summers of 1978 – 80 • spring 2007
Lapwing	occasionally seen in fields and Taw Marsh eg flock of 40 13.2.1983	
Curlew	flying down Belstone Cleave	20.5.1990
Common sandpiper	seen at Taw Marsh	23.10.1982

Herring gull	very occasional flocks in fields	
Lesser black-backed gull	very occasional solitary birds in fields	e.g. 13.11.1983
Black-headed gull	occasional flocks in fields	
Long-eared owl	seen at Skaigh by Mike Sampson	circa 1958 ¹
Barn owl	seen at Priestacott	10.1.1975
Nightjar	seen near <i>Eastlake Farm</i> by Thelma Reddington	25.5.2002
Swift	seen around the village centre every summer	
Hoopoe	seen in garden of <i>Barn Close</i> by Gordon Vaughan <i>et al</i>	19.4.1982
Lesser spotted woodpecker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seen at <i>Old Rectory Farm</i> by Mark Blacksell • Belstone Cleave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • circa 1995 • 1964¹
Woodlark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seen on Brenamoor Common • singing male at Belstone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9.6.1972 & 16.12.1972 • 1965¹
Tree pipit	occasionally seen in Belstone Cleave	
Waxwing	group of three seen at Fatherford by Peter Radlett	7.1.2001
Grasshopper warbler	seen at <i>Lower Hobey</i> by Mark Blacksell	circa May 1995
Sedge warbler	seen on Brenamoor Common	20.8.1988
Garden warbler	occasionally seen in Belstone Cleave	
Whitethroat	occasionally seen in Belstone Cleave	
Wood warbler	seen and heard in Skaigh and Halstock Woods every summer	
Dartford warbler	female seen in Belstone Cleave	September 1997 ¹
Firecrest	seen at <i>Dorney</i> by David Shott	9.1.2001
Whinchat	very occasionally seen at Taw Marsh, eg four on 26.9.1975	
Black redstart	seen at Taw Marsh	6.11.1977 & 7.4.1984
Blackbird	[presumably an oversight from the Audit list!]	
Fieldfare	large flocks often seen in winter	
Marsh tit	regularly seen at <i>Little Gables</i>	
Brambling	occasionally seen in the winter at <i>Little Gables</i>	
Linnet	flocks often seen in 1970s and 1980s; never seen now.	
Crossbill	flock on nine seen at <i>Little Gables</i>	9.7.1997
Corn bunting	flocks of about 20 in fields	3.1.1972 & 5.1.1975
Cirl bunting	seen at Birchy Lake	7.7.1986

Yellowhammer	often seen and heard in the 1970s and 1980s; never seen now.	
Ring-necked parakeet	escapee seen at <i>Andrews Corner</i>	January 1999

¹ These records taken from *The Birds of Dartmoor* by Roger Smaldon, published in 2005 by Isabelline Books.