

## New Sand Martin Accommodation Available at Teifi Marshes

Sand martins in the locality of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales's Teifi Marshes nature reserve can now benefit from further nesting opportunities as a new artificial nesting structure has recently been installed. The structure, installed with the help of volunteers provides nesting for 96 pairs of Sand martins although other species such as Kingfishers may also take advantage of the opportunity.

Sand martins are common summer visitors, arriving in March and leaving in October. They nest in colonies, digging burrows in steep, sandy cliffs, usually around water, so are commonly found on wetland sites. The tunnels they bore can be up to a metre in length. At a chamber at the end of the burrow, four or five eggs are laid on collected straw and feathers. Sand martins are sociable birds and will nest together in summer and gather to roost in large numbers in autumn; eventually they migrate to Africa where they spend the winter.



The aim of the structure is to help provide nesting opportunities for sand martins as the banks on the nearby river Teifi are prone to erosion with high water flows and the activities of nearby sand quarries are changing the availability of natural nesting sites on an annual basis. The

## PEMBROKESHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



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hope is to mitigate in some way for these issues.

The design of the structure also allows ringers access to nests for ringing and monitoring opportunities and so the Teifi Ringing Group are patiently waiting for the first arrival(s). At present there are hundreds of sand martins using the reserve and so we hope that the structure will soon attract some to nest on site and add to the rich diversity of wildlife found.

The installation of the structure was only possible through the generous donation of funds from private donors, the Pembrokeshire Bird Group, Environment Wales, the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership and BIFFA Award. The Wildlife Trust is grateful for all their support.

**Nathan Walton**  
Wildlife Trust Officer  
for Pembrokeshire



## Eelgrass Survey in North Haven, Skomer

The eelgrass, *Zostera marina* is the only flowering plant within the British Isles that grows and produces seed entirely submerged by seawater. Eelgrass populations are highly productive habitats and they provide an important stabilising function for the mobile marine sediments. The maintenance of *Z. marina* populations directly influences the associated algal and invertebrate communities that are supported by them. These communities are an important source of food for other marine animals and birds. The optimal growth conditions for *Z. marina* are in relatively shallow, sheltered and stable environments.

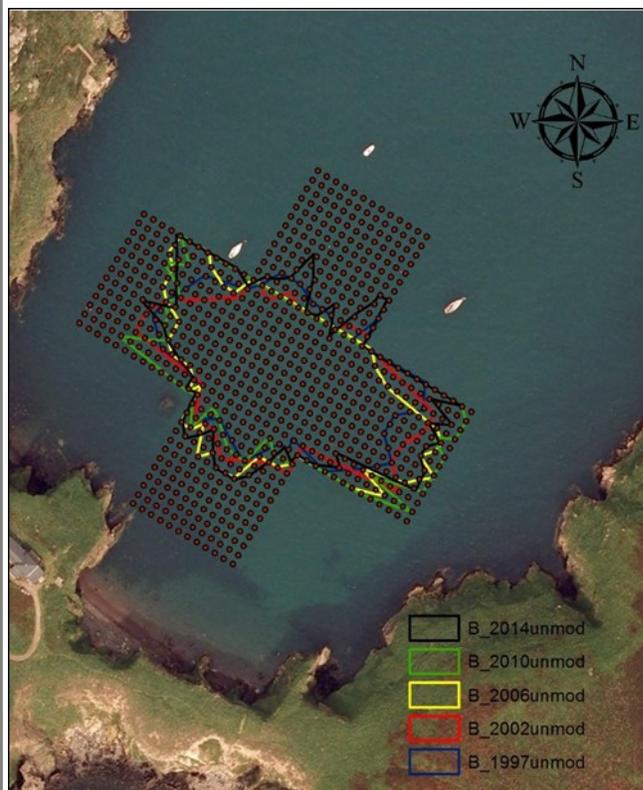
The *Z marina* bed at North Haven, Skomer is one of 8 sub-tidal beds in Wales. The first surveys of the bed were completed in the 1980's and with the establishment of the Skomer Marine Conservation Zone (formerly Skomer Marine Nature Reserve) in 1990, monitoring of the bed began.

### Dive Survey in Progress



In 1997 a method was developed to survey the eelgrass bed using volunteer divers to complete a map of extent and shoot density. The survey is completed every 4 years so that changes can be monitored, the methods were refined in 2006 and these were used for the 2010 and 2014 surveys. In summer 2014, teams of volunteer divers worked over 3 weekends to complete the survey and maps have been created to compare to the previous surveys.

On the map the dots represent survey points and the polygons represent the area extent for each survey year.



The extent had increased from 8044.0 m<sup>2</sup> in 2010, to 8224.6 m<sup>2</sup> in 2014. Comparisons with the first detailed survey in 1997 show an increase in extent to the north, west and east.

The shoot density had decreased from 41.1 shoots /m<sup>2</sup> in 2010 to 35.1 shoots /m<sup>2</sup> in 2014. This decrease was not thought to be significant when tested statistically. Most of the decreases occurred in the eastern area of the bed.

In 2013 and 2014 a new survey method was tested. This was an acoustic survey completed by the NRW Fisheries Assessment Team using a Biosonics DT-X split beam echosounder. Comparing the acoustic results (red area) with the diver survey (black polygon) show that the two areas match up very well. The extended area out to the east, shown in the acoustic survey will need confirming as the diver survey recorded this area as kelp with no *Z. marina* present.



The acoustic surveys have proved valuable in assessing extent and providing an estimate of stand height (shoot length). The acoustic method is quick and gives comparable area estimates, however as yet the acoustic method cannot estimate shoot density.

**Kate Lock**  
Natural Resources Wales

## Amphibians and Reptiles Get a Helping Hand at Llangloffan Fen

Work underway at Llangloffan Fen



The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales has recently benefitted from funding from the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust to restore and create new ponds at its Llangloffan Fen nature reserve. Two ponds, one of which was an old one now restored have been created with the use of a mechanical digger.

These new areas of open water will provide further suitable habitat for the assemblage of species the reserve supports that depend upon them. Amphibians such as frogs, toads and newts will of course benefit the greatest yet invertebrates such as damselflies and dragonflies, birds (such as Heron and Water rail) and aquatic plants (such as the rare Three-lobed water crowfoot and Pillwort) will also gain. One of the pools is of considerable size and evidence of Otter use has already been recorded through spraints being found on adjacent tussocks.

Spoil from the excavated pools has been piled in banks nearby having a south westerly aspect to provide suitable basking opportunities off the wetland floor for reptiles such as the common lizard, adder and grass snake. These banks should allow a visitor to the reserve a better opportunity to see one of the species named, although Grass snakes are also aquatic in nature and can spend up to an hour under water if disturbed!



It will take a year or so for species to really establish themselves within the new areas of open water, yet from the results of past ponds created on site, the future looks good.

**Nathan Walton**  
Wildlife Trust Officer  
for Pembrokeshire



## Biodiversity at Orielton Field Centre

Orielton is part of the Field Studies Council and has a long tradition as a field study centre. Based in the heart of South Pembrokeshire, it has a varied 120 acre estate of woodland, grassland and aquatic habitats. As well as the intriguing history and rich ecology of the estate, the field centre is within easy reach of several excellent rocky shores and the fabulous Broom-hill Burrows dune system.

### Orielton FSC



The Field Studies Council began in 1943. It's research journal '*Field Studies*' was set up in 1959, but sadly stopped publishing in 2003. Many experienced tutors used to publish studies on their local flora and fauna in this journal. However, many of the papers from this journal are still available to download for free online at: <http://fsj.field-studies-council.org/>

The end of the field studies journal brought an end to some of the excellent biodiversity monitoring and sharing by the FSC. Over the last



Fieldwork at Orielton

couple of years, FSC Head Office has begun to redress this. It has gathered a small but elite team of naturalists to form our biodiversity squad! One of their top priorities is to unite the 17 centres in a cohesive nationwide biodiversity monitoring scheme. We have a resource of enthusiastic staff in a variety of locations willing to start a shared recording program for long term studies ahead. The next step is incorporating our monitoring into our teaching.

Orielton is keen to make the most of this new initiative. Although we already have some links with County Recorders, we would like to develop this relationship further by inviting West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre and County Recorders to Orielton for a day of recording. It would also be good to use this opportunity to check with County Recorders and others what data we have that might be useful to them.

The FSC in Pembrokeshire also runs Dale Fort Field Centre and would be interested in running a similar day there.

**Martha Boalch**  
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# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ANNUAL STOCK TAKE OF UK'S WILDFLOWERS

The new National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) was launched this spring and for the first time enables scientists to take an annual stock take of the UK's wild plants and their habitats, but to do this we need the public's help. We are looking for volunteers to carry out surveys of wildflowers and their habitats that will provide robust evidence of which widespread plants are increasing or declining, as well as indicating the changing state of our most valued habitats such as grassland, fenland and even road verges. Plants are nature's building blocks and this new monitoring scheme will sit alongside existing schemes for the UK's birds and butterflies to help us understand more about how the countryside is changing.



Chris Cheffings, from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee said: "Currently, information on plant species' abundance and change is very limited, and it is difficult to gauge the condition of habitats outside protected sites. JNCC is delighted to be able to support the NPMS, which will fill this significant gap in UK biodiversity surveillance. The annual results collected by volunteers will help to identify trends in hundreds of species, allowing us to assess plant community changes."

The search is now on to find 2000 volunteers to take part in the NPMS who will play a vital role in gathering information. Together the volunteers will monitor wild plants in 28 important habitats, ranging from hedgerows and meadows to salt marsh and scree slopes.

Hayley New, from Plantlife says "The NPMS is hugely enjoyable and over 400 volunteers have helped us set up the new scheme. It's easy to do and everyone will receive free training and guidance plus support from the partnership for volunteers who have queries, as well as web support and illustrated guidance notes – so volunteers will have the perfect survey tool kit to get them started!

How does the NPMS work?

Volunteers will be able to choose from three options depending on their level of expertise: recording from a short or an extended list of target species in each habitat or recording all species they find in their plots.

Volunteers will be given a 1 km square with a grid showing up to 25 locations. Surveyors will be asked to visit three of those locations and carry out surveys in square plots and then identify two linear features such as hedgerows, rivers and road verges and survey these locations too.

The squares have been randomly chosen, but with a focus on squares containing habitats of interest.

The team are now seeking volunteers in Pembrokeshire. For more information on the NPMS and how to take part please visit [www.npms.org.uk](http://www.npms.org.uk)

**Felicity Harris**  
Plantlife



**National Plant  
Monitoring Scheme**



# Biodiversity Events

## May—July



Date	Title	Information	Contact
13 May	Flower & Bug Walk, Freshwater East	A Walk to look at the flora and insects in the Local Nature Reserve in Freshwater East. Vicky Tomlinson will share some foraging tips and also the folklore and medicinal tales linked to the local plants. Suitable for all ages.	01646 672615
15 May	More Than a Walk	Let our National Park guide begin your journey of discovery. Uncover the stories of the landscape, creatures and people that give this national park its unique character.	01834 845040
25 May	Crab Catching at Dale	A great fun activity for all the family. Find out more about these fascinating creatures. All kit provided. Children must be accompanied by an adult . BOOKING ESSENTIAL	01834 845040
26 May	Brilliant Bats, St David's	A family friendly evening where history meets wildlife. Explore Pembrokeshire's most special historical locations. Follow footsteps to the past, look for bats and listen for their calls.	01834 845040
27 May	Brilliant Bats, Carew	A family friendly evening where history meets wildlife. Explore Pembrokeshire's most special historical locations. Follow footsteps to the past, look for bats and listen for their calls.	01834 845040
28 May	Water World, Broadhaven	A great fun activity for all the family as our National Park ranger guides you on an exploration of the river. Get in close and find out about river life. All nets provided, BUT bring suitable footwear. Children must be accompanied by an adult .	01834 845040
28 May	Water World, St David's	A great fun activity for all the family as our National Park ranger guides you on an exploration of the river. Get in close and find out about river life. All nets provided, BUT bring suitable footwear. Children must be accompanied by an adult	01834 845040
29 May	Seashore Safari	Join us to take a look at the fascinating wildlife and natural wonders on the shore. Explore the life found in Pembrokeshire's rockpools. Children must be accompanied	01834 845040
08 June	Bee ID Day. Scolton Manor	Join experts from Bumblebee Conservation Trust to learn about bumblebee ID and ecology. Booking essential.	Ant Rogers 01437 776146
10 June	Early Morning Otter Walk, Stackpole	A family-friendly, early morning two mile stroll along the upper reaches of the Bosherton Lily Pools in search of the elusive otter and other wildlife.	01834 845040
10 June	More than a Walk, Mynachlogddu	Let our National Park guide begin your journey of discovery. Uncover the stories of the landscape, creatures and people that give this national park its unique character.	01834 845040

# Biodiversity Events

## May—July



Date	Title	Information	Contact
10 June	Flower & Bug Walk, Freshwater East	A Walk to look at the flora and insects in the Local Nature Reserve in Freshwater East. Vicky Tomlinson will share some foraging tips and also the folklore and medicinal tales linked to the local plants. Suitable for all ages.	01646 672615
12 June	More than a Walk, Nevern	Let our National Park guide begin your journey of discovery. Uncover the stories of the landscape, creatures and people that give this national park its unique character. More than just a walk in the park!	01834 845040
17 June	Flower & Bug Walk, Freshwater East	A Walk to look at the flora and insects in the Local Nature Reserve in Freshwater East. Vicky Tomlinson will share some foraging tips and also the folklore and medicinal tales linked to the local plants. Suitable for all ages.	01646 672615
20 June	Micro-moths, Welsh Wildlife Centre, Cilgerran	Moth identification training course for people who have some knowledge of macro-moths, but want to look further at micro-moths. This course will introduce micro-moths to beginners at looking at this group and also expand knowledge of more advanced micro-moth surveyors. 10am to 4pm. - Maximum of 15 participants – booking essential.	<a href="http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/animals/butterflies-and-moths.aspx">http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/animals/butterflies-and-moths.aspx</a>
24 June	Flower & Bug Walk, Freshwater East	A Walk to look at the flora and insects in the Local Nature Reserve in Freshwater East. Vicky Tomlinson will share some foraging tips and also the folklore and medicinal tales linked to the local plants. Suitable for all ages.	01646 672615
12 July	More than a Walk, Cresswell Quay	Let our National Park guide begin your journey of discovery. Uncover the stories of the landscape, creatures and people that give this national park its unique character. More than just a walk in the park!	01834 845040
18 – 19 July	Freshwater West BioBlitz	Come and help us identify and record as many different types of plants and animals on Freshwater West and Gupton farm.	01646 661425

## PBP Contact Details

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Pembrokeshire Biodiversity website:

[www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk) (search - biodiversity)

Wales Biodiversity website:

[www.biodiversitywales.org.uk](http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk)

## Biodiversity Newsletters

Mae'r cylch-lythyr hwn ar gael yng Nghymraeg, cysylltwch â Ant am gopi cymraeg.

*PBP would like to thank all those who contributed to this newsletter. If you would like to write an article for the next newsletter please contact Ant.*

## PBP Members

County Landowners Association



Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust



Farmers Union of Wales



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group



Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development



Keep Wales Tidy



Prince's Trust Cymru



Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



National Farmers Union – Wales



The National Trust



Natural Resources Wales



The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales



Pembroke 21C Community Association Limited



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Pembrokeshire County Council



West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre

