

1. Volunteer training workshops

Sadly the majority of our volunteer training workshops were cancelled this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic however we were able to run some workshops over Zoom and carry out a number of surveys either on our own or with small groups of volunteers.

- Adders – despite coming up with a new list of survey sites over the winter period, our volunteer training workshop was cancelled in March and all surveys were put on hold due to the best survey period being during lockdown. Hope to restart these again in 2021.
- Duke of Burgundy – refresher workshop for existing surveyors cancelled in May and all adult surveys missed due to flight period during lockdown. Refresher workshop for larval feeding damage also cancelled in June however a few surveys were carried out by myself and Julian just after restrictions lifted although sadly as larval feeding damage is hard to confirm they were inconclusive in determining if Dukes were present or not.
- Rock-rose Pot Beetle – cancelled in May, however surveys were able to be carried out by Liam Olds (Buglife), Julian, myself and several volunteers at the two known Glos sites and one historic site (Rodborough Common). These resulted in record numbers being found and a very exciting rediscovery. More beetles were found at the two known Glos sites than had been found across all known sites in England in the past 150 years. In addition, volunteers found the beetle at Rodborough Common for the first time in 35 years where it had been thought to have gone extinct.
- Large Blue surveys – fortunately restrictions were also lifted in time for surveys to be carried out with fantastic results at Rodborough Common where reintroductions had taken place in 2019. See Julian Bendle's report for full details.
- Bumblebees – planned workshops for bumblebees were also cancelled although several surveys for our target species, Red-shanked Carder Bee and Ruderal Bumblebee, were carried out in August by our colleagues at Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT), myself and volunteers. Sadly none were found this year however revisits to historic sites were useful in understanding how the habitat had changed since the last recorded sighting and whether they still looked suitable for earlier surveys in 2021.
- Fly Orchid – refresher workshop/survey days with Plantlife cancelled in June however several surveys were carried out after lockdown lifted by myself and Julian. Unfortunately, these were mostly unsuccessful in locating any orchids. This was likely due to early flowering during lockdown and plants having burnt off by the time we were able to get out.
- Bats – during the winter months, I carried out monitoring of two sites adjacent to known Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat hibernation sites using Audiomoths (static bat detectors) to provide evidence of the need for grazing near to hibernacula during winter months. Results of this are still being analysed by Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

Once lockdown was lifted, I was also able to start the summer monitoring of Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat at Rodborough Common. Audiomoths were deployed around two grazing compartments, aiming to see any difference in use by the bats before and during grazing. This data is also now with BCT and will be sent back this winter for myself and volunteers to analyse further. To help with this we held a refresher workshop (over Zoom) for existing volunteers on how to use Kaleidoscope (bat sound analysis software) with BCT in September. This will allow our volunteers to help analyse results from this both the summer and winter monitoring.

- Juniper – carried out surveys with newly trained volunteers at both Juniper Hill and Painswick Beacon in Oct-Dec 2019 to create inventories of all Juniper bushes and seedlings across each site. Final part of Painswick Beacon to be finished off this winter.
- Rugged Oil Beetle – following the 2019 training workshop, a total of 21 surveys were carried out over winter 2019-2020 by myself and volunteers with a number of good results and two new sites added to the list. The 2020 volunteer workshop with Buglife was held over Zoom this October. A total of 44 people attended and over four nights since I have taken 20 people out in small groups to Painswick Beacon to show them beetles prior to starting surveys. Over the course of these visits we found totals of 85, 132 and 143 beetles on successive nights beating our previous record of 59 beetles at this site! This shows quite how important Painswick Beacon is as a stronghold for this rare species. A further 9 surveys have also taken place so far with a another new site (Badger's Mount) already added to the list for this year. Many more surveys are planned for winter 2020-21 with new and existing volunteer surveyors.

2. Landowner/land manager training workshops

- Greater Horseshoe Bat land management workshop led by BCT and the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project held in Nov 2019 Woodchester Mansion/Park. 13 landowners/land managers attended and learnt how best to manage their land for Greater Horseshoe Bats and bats in general.
- Managing Your Grassland for Wildlife workshops (x2) planned for August with BCT, Plantlife, BBCT, Buglife and Natural England both cancelled.

3. Additional events

- Bat and moth events – 6 bat and moth nights/events at Rococo Garden and Woodchester Park had to be cancelled in May and September this year. However, I was able to attend a bat and moth event at Tortworth Arboretum this October where myself and Matt Brierley ran a total of 4 bat walks (for groups of up to 6) around the arboretum. Approx. 24 people attended.
- Community events – all larger community events such as Minchinhampton Marking Day, Stroud Festival of Nature, Prinknash Butterfly Garden open days, Big Butterfly Count event at the Museum in the Park all cancelled. Our Wild Writing workshop was also cancelled.
- Guided walks – walks planned with Stroud Valleys Project and several others around local sites also cancelled.
- Talks – in person talks cancelled however a Zoom talk for the Field Studies Council on Rugged Oil Beetles (part of their Virtual Meet Ups programme) had over 90 people attend and has since had over 140 views on the FSC YouTube channel. I also gave a talk on bumblebees to people local to Cranham and Painswick also over Zoom as requested by a local volunteer keen to enthuse other villagers to make their gardens bumblebee friendly.

4. School visits

- Planned visit to Rough Bank with Kingshill School Eco Club and to Rodborough Common with Gastrells Primary School cancelled.

5. Misc

- Factsheets on our target bat, plant, bumblebee and beetle species all completed (written by our various partner organisations) and now available to download from the Limestone's Living Legacies page of the Back from the Brink website <https://naturebftb.co.uk/the-projects/limestones-living-legacies/>.

- Participated in BC's Top Traps video for schools during lockdown – can be viewed on BC's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14oH73MVM1g&t=1s>.
- Volunteer Thank You event cancelled in March, held over Zoom in April

To end Sept 2020:

- **343** individual volunteers have volunteered with our project – includes 127 survey volunteers, 130 non-survey volunteers (e.g. practical or event volunteers) and 86 additional people trained on workshops.
- **976.5** days have been worked by volunteers
- **473** different people have learnt skills directly through workshops/practical work parties
- **3885** different people have been engaged with directly through the project