

## Hurst Water Meadow News November 11

### Thank you

As this is our last report for 2011, we thank all those who have helped us this year, or who have enjoyed using the meadows.

**Web site** - [www.hurst-water-meadow.co.uk](http://www.hurst-water-meadow.co.uk)

Our re-designed web site is running and in use. We could use more photographs of the meadows. These can be new, or historical. If you have any that are suitable, please send them to us.

### Bats Project

**Biodiversity plans get £1800 grant** - it has just been confirmed that the Trust is to receive an £1800 grant\* to purchase bat boxes and nest boxes for small birds and owls. This project will be run jointly with members of St Birinus Church, so the boxes will be sited in the Hurst, the Old Bridge Meadow and the grounds of the church. The grant also provides for bat detectors and software to enable species identification through analysis of the bats' echo-location calls.

The aim of the project is to encourage greater populations of birds and bats by providing suitable nesting sites and to record the species present along the length of the River Thames from its confluence with the River Thames up to the A4074. With assistance from a registered bird ringer (Mike Rogers (Earth Trust volunteer)), we shall be able to ring the nesting birds and add their data to the national database. As the project becomes established, we plan to extend it, through collaboration with the newly formed River Thames Conservation Project, upstream as far as Wheatley.

Bats will be a completely new area of interest for Hurst and St Birinus volunteers so we will have a lot to learn. Fortunately, we will have help from experts, first from Mike Rogers whose enthusiasm started this project off, and also from other members of the Earth Trust staff.

We have a small core of volunteers, but we hope many more people would like to get involved. There will be a lot to do: siting the boxes (as soon as possible), bird identification and recording, bird ringing, bat identification and recording, cleaning out the bird nest boxes each year, and more. Many people are already familiar with our small birds such as tits, but others such as the blackcap and willow warbler are less easy to see and identify. Bats are commonly seen in the village, especially near the Thames, but few people know anything about them, fascinating little creatures with their remarkable radar system.

Do please help with this project – I can promise you a very interesting time. You can contact me, John Metcalfe, on 01865 340054 or by email ([john.metcalfe@fritillary.demon.co.uk](mailto:john.metcalfe@fritillary.demon.co.uk)).

\*The grant is provided by Grondon Waste Management under the Landfill Tax Rebate Scheme and is administered by the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2).

### Environment Agency

We have agreed to allow the EA to site a river level sensor on the Old Bridge Meadow. These sensors are sited on critical parts of the Thames and Thame and allow the water levels to be managed when there is risk of flooding and so will help the village. The EA will plan to install this before the end of the year.

### Volunteering to help on the meadows

If you'd like to help by taking part in future working parties, please contact Graham Beland at [workingparty@hurst-water-meadow.co.uk](mailto:workingparty@hurst-water-meadow.co.uk). It is a relaxing way to spend a Saturday morning, with work suitable for all ages and abilities. We hope to have further working parties during the winter.

**Mike Southon, hon. secretary 341544**

