

Devon Wildlife Trust

Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) has a membership of 36,000 and exists to achieve a Devon richer in wildlife. The organisation was established as a registered charity in 1962 by a dedicated group of nature and wildlife enthusiasts. Over the years, DWT has grown to become the county's largest not-for-profit organisation concerned with the conservation of Devon's natural environment.

DWT's main activities include:

- Management of 42 nature reserves
- Training and advice on wildlife-friendly land management
- Provision of educational and inspirational activities to encourage sustainable use of natural resources
- Marine conservation
- Piloting projects to link rural landscapes and wildlife with social and economic well-being

Halsdon Woodland Recovery Programme

Halsdon nature reserve is a 57 hectare Site of Special Scientific Interest. Its spectacular mosaic of wildlife habitats features mixed deciduous woodlands, riverside meadows and marshes, and a 2.4 km stretch of the river Torridge.

For hundreds of years Halsdon's woodlands were coppiced for timber and fuel. Continuous management created an open, diverse habitat in which insects, birds and flowers flourished. However these traditional activities died out in the second half of the twentieth century. Although hosts of spring wildflowers and autumn fungi can still be seen in some parts of the reserve, in other areas the light under-storey has been replaced by dense stands of dark, impenetrable holly. At the same time beech and conifers, alien to this part of Devon, have multiplied and now dominate parts of the canopy. The net effect is to suppress the growth of native shrubs and flowers.

In 2008 Devon Wildlife Trust began the process of restoring this woodland to its former glory by clearing the holly under-storey in one trial area. We also started work on improving the access tracks for forestry equipment and for public access. The results have been very encouraging, and we are now extending this work into other areas of the nature reserve.

Phase Two of Halsdon's Recovery Plan to improve both its wildlife and amenity value involves:

- Clearing dense holly and beech from the under-storey.
- Thinning out areas where the tree canopy is overcrowded.
- Reinstating rotational coppicing.
- Improving access tracks.
- Providing a disabled access turning circle by the riverside wildlife hide.

The kind support of the Naturesave Trust will help to provide the materials we need to complete this programme of work.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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