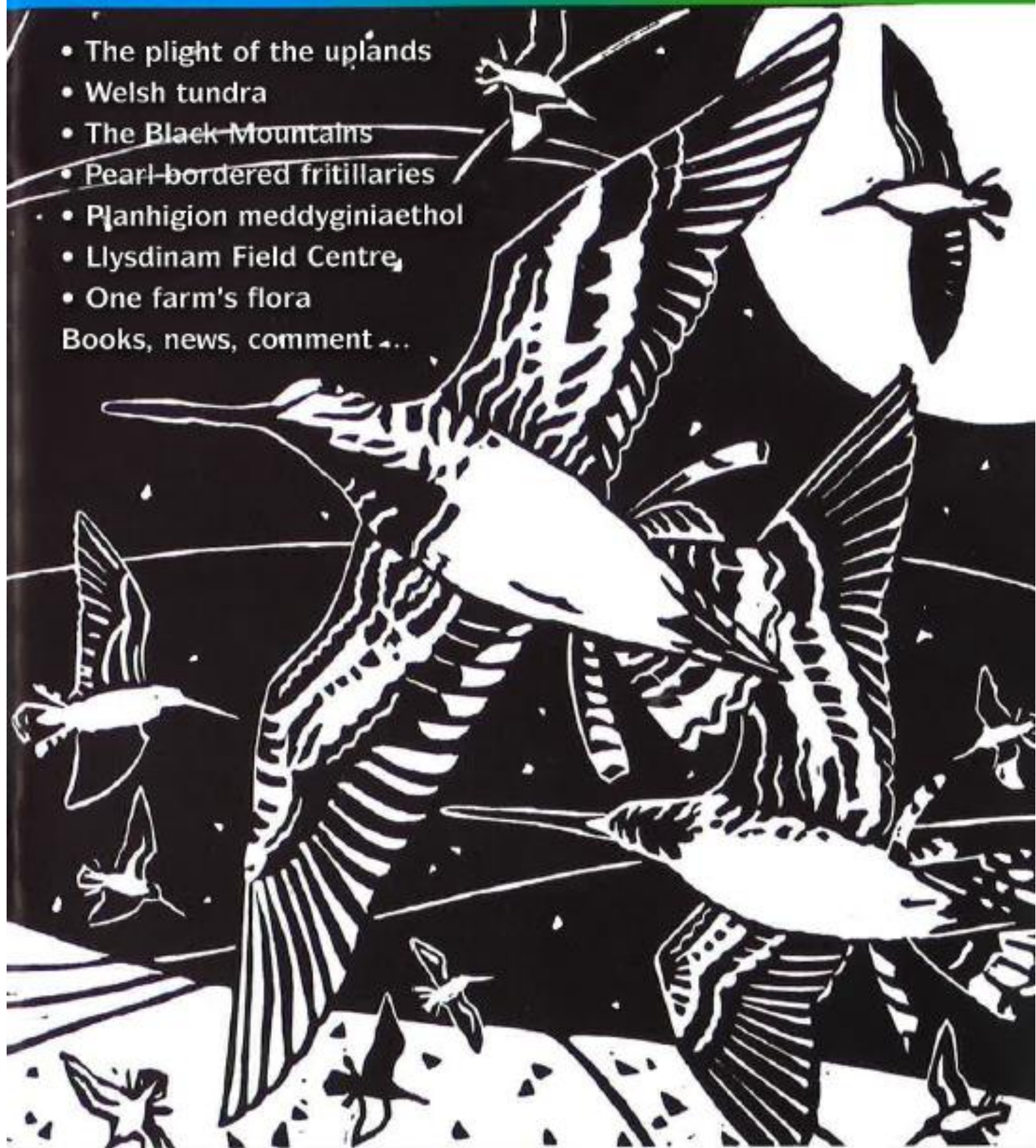


NATUR CYMRU

Nature of Wales

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- The plight of the uplands
 - Welsh tundra
 - The Black Mountains
 - Pearl-bordered fritillaries
 - Pŵanhigion meddyginiaethol
 - Llysdinam Field Centre,
 - One farm's flora
- Books, news, comment ...





Natura 2000 - the natural wealth of Wales

A report out in November 2015 puts a price, for the first time, on the cost of restoring the very best of Wales' wildlife. A project run by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and supported by the EU LIFE scheme has calculated that £120 million is needed by 2020 to tackle the challenges on Wales' 112 Natura 2000 sites and to make significant progress towards bringing the 123 different protected habitats and species into favourable condition.

It may seem like a substantial sum, but the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which make up the Natura 2000 series account for around 7% of the land area of Wales and nearly 36% of Welsh seas. Any investment is returned many times over as these places deliver benefits such as recreation, tourism, carbon sequestration, flood defence and pollution control.

The results were drawn from the work of the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme, which has prepared Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs) for each site and identified 3,600 actions. Each PIP was produced by NRW Conservation Officers, with valuable input from partners involved with site management.

The PIP for Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Chadney Mosses SAC near Wrexham gives a good example of the type of priority actions required; management agreements with landowners, direct management on the National Nature Reserve, and the preparation of a Site Nitrogen Action Plan. Work includes tree and scrub removal, blocking drains to retain water on-

site, removal of solid waste, and improving ditch management. Vital funding for this work is now being sought in an EU LIFE submission, led by Natural England, which the PIP has helped to inform.

Eleven key challenges affect Natura 2000 sites across Wales, including: invasive species; inappropriate grazing; air pollution; diffuse water pollution; changes to water conditions; climate change; and habitat fragmentation. Thematic Action Plans have been prepared for each of these, looking at strategic measures such as changes to policy and legislation which could help resolve issues which cannot be tackled at a local level.

The plans can be used to guide delivery on the ground by NRW and other organisations. They can also be used as a springboard for making European and other grant bids, and integrating Natura 2000 needs into other sectors such as flood defence, forestry, or tourism to maximise mutual benefits from limited funds.

Making the best of it

When resources are limited they must be carefully targeted, and actions on specific sites have been

prioritised according to where the need is greatest. A Wales-level analysis has identified certain priority ecosystems, particularly where designated species and habitats are in poor condition. These include peatlands, sand dunes, woodland, rivers, estuaries, saltmarsh, lagoons and shingle.

The wealth of wildlife supported by Natura 2000 is showcased in 11 short films in English and Welsh, narrated by broadcaster Dei Tomos. These films communicate the importance of Natura 2000 protected sites, not only to wildlife, but also to people and the economy.

Kathryn Hewitt, LIFE Natura 2000 Programme Manager

Further reading

The *LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales: Summary Report* (Natural Resources Wales, Cardiff, 2015), together with PIPs, Thematic Action Plans and other outputs of the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme, including the short films, are available on the LIFE Natura 2000 web pages at www.naturalresources.wales/LIFEN2K. Further information can be found on facebook, twitter and Youtube.



Cors Carno Special Area of Conservation

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