

## BUTTSOLE POND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Buttsole pond is located alongside Lower Street to the South of Eastry. The area in question is approximately 2000sqm. This brief report is concerned with improving the pond for the benefit of wildlife and the local community.

### **Site Description**

Buttsole pond is dominated by common reedmace (*Typha latifolia*) with invasive species Australian swamp stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*) and parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) present. While there is some open water to the south it appears that the abundance of common reedmace has significantly dried out the pond. On visiting in August and October in 2007 the northern half of the pond was boggy but there was no standing water. The pond margins particularly to the south and along the road side are becoming choked with willow suckers and bramble has begun to colonise some areas. The concrete culvert offering drainage to Lower Street has become crowded with vegetation.

Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) is found here and is of particular note as this plant only occurs in ten tetrads in Kent. Aside from this no notable species have been recorded. The name of the pond suggests that the pond may be of considerable age; "sole" is a common name place element meaning muddy or watery place.

However, it should be stressed that, other than for water vole, no survey of wildlife populations has been carried out. The site is likely to have species of reptiles and amphibians present and will certainly have invertebrates present. The willows provide nesting and food for birds, although it is believed that wildfowl are significantly less active than in previous years. During the October visit rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) were very active with half a dozen clearly visible at any one time. The survey carried out in August found no water vole signs and the presence of other mammals is unknown at present.

### **Objective 1: Eradicate Australian swamp stonecrop and parrot's feather**

Australian swamp stonecrop and parrot's feather are invasive plants which landowners have a duty to prevent from spreading. The plants are easily spread by people and other animals as they can propagate from very small fragments of roots or leaves; this also makes it difficult to eradicate either species. If left unchecked it is likely that these two species will spread to all areas of the pond and become dominant. This would not only dramatically

reduce the wildlife value of the pond it would also eventually dry out the pond.

### **Prescription to achieve objective 1**

The action needed is the same for both species. It is unlikely that these plants can be eradicated from site within one year. Therefore, the following recommended actions will need to be repeated each year until the site is free from these invasive plants.

Dig out plants and bury on site under 20 cm of soil. This course of action is unlikely to be wholly successful on its own as fragments of the plants are likely to remain in the soil. The affected area may need to be treated with dichobenil (a herbicide). This substance is applied in granular form to the area of the pond that has been cleared of vegetation. However, further advice should be sought on this matter as this may have implications for the whole pond. All herbicides must be applied by somebody with the relevant certification and consent will have to be obtained from the Environment Agency. The WCCP can provide details of a suitable contractor.

**Note:** Unfortunately the area where Australian swamp stonecrop occurs is the area where bogbean grows and it is likely that the colony will be adversely affected in carrying out the prescriptions outlined in this plan.

### **Objective 2: Reduce rat population**

The rats have a very visible presence at Buttsole Pond. It is likely that this has contributed to the decline in recreational use of the area and has already created a barrier to one group of prospective volunteers. Care needs to be taken when working in areas occupied by rats, as a serious disease (leprospirosis or Weil's disease) can be contracted by people. Precautions such as covering cuts and ensuring that gloves are worn at all times need to be implemented for people working on sites known to be occupied by rats.

### **Prescriptions to achieve objective 2**

Advice should be sought from an expert on how to control the rat population. Due to the expanse of farmland directly adjacent to the site it is unlikely that the rat population will be eradicated. For any action taken to have most effect it should be carried out when the adjacent field is bare.

### **Objective 3: Reduce cover of Typha**

Common reedmace will continue to reduce the water level of the pond and is also likely to spread. However, it should be noted that this plant does have some value to wildlife, particularly for invertebrates and should not be removed all together.

### **Prescriptions to achieve objective 3**

Ideally, the cover of reedmace should not be more than 30%. The reedmace can be removed by pulling when the water level is low. The pulled material should be left on the bank of the pond for a day to allow invertebrates to return to the pond. The material can then be burnt if required.

The first years should concentrate on pulling the common reedmace in the northern end of the site to attempt to restore areas of open water. It would be sensible not to remove the common reedmace surrounding the Australian swamp stonecrop and parrot's feather as the common reedmace appears to be acting as a barrier preventing these plants from spreading throughout the whole pond.

### **IMPORTANT PROVISOS REGARDING PRESCRIPTIONS FOR 3 & 4:**

- Caution is advised when burning wet or damp material as a large amount of smoke is likely to be created. Burning should only take place when the prevailing wind will direct smoke away from the village and more importantly from the road. The fire brigade should be informed that you are carrying out works involving a controlled fire.
- Management works should **not** be carried out between February and September.
- It is also important not to carry out too much work at any one time, as it can be hard for some pond species to adapt to change. As a general rule only one third of the pond should be managed each year.

### **Objective 4: Reduce bank side willows**

Left unchecked the willow on the banks of the pond will continue to expand. Willow species are an invasive plant in wet conditions and as the plants dominance of an area grows the area tends to dry out significantly. Leaves from the willow and other trees fall into the pond filling the pond and the rotting leaves reduce the oxygen in the water available for wetland wildlife. The willow has already begun to dry out Buttsole pond and will continue to do

so unless controlled. It is important to retain some of the willows as this species has been present on the banks of the pond for some years and the trees provide food and shelter to many species.

#### **Prescriptions to achieve objective 4**

The mature willow trees should be retained for wildlife value and to protect the character of the pond. The willow suckers and other young willows should be targeted for cutting. Some of the mature trees should be regularly pruned where they over hang the pond to reduce the amount of dead plant matter that accumulates there, however, it is not necessary to remove over hanging limbs all together as they offer value for wildlife. The cut material can be left stacked on site **on dry land** as cut willow will take root and grow again if left on boggy ground. If there is not enough room on dry land then burning will be necessary. Please see appendix one for further guidance on scrub clearance and bonfires.

The willow alongside the road should be targeted as a priority the suckers are most abundant here. Otherwise the trees and brambles around the southern end of the pond should also be thinned to create a more open feel.

*[This report has been compiled by the White Cliffs Countryside Project for Eastry Parish Council.](#)*