



Traditional orchard and wildflower meadow, Trelissick, Cornwall

Traditional orchards are one of the new additions to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan list of priority species and habitats. Though a man-made habitat, orchards often support threatened and endangered species, such as the lesser-spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, mistletoe *Viscum album* and the noble chafer *Gnorimus nobilis* – a beetle whose larvae live in the rotting wood of old fruit trees.



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> Standard and target setting for nature conservation

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JNCC plays a leading role in setting the standards and targets that provide a consistent framework for UK nature conservation

An important part of JNCC's work is to advise on targets and standards for nature conservation in the UK.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan was created to help implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, and since 1996 its focus has been on a list of 577 priority species and 45 priority habitats. In 2004, the Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG) began a review of priorities to ensure that effort is focussed in the correct areas given new information, emerging issues, and changes in the status of habitats and species.

Selections were made by a series of nine topic groups, and more than 500 specialists contributed expertise and information to the process. In August 2007, that substantial body of work came to fruition with the publication of new priority lists for both habitats and species.

There were significant changes, with the new list including 1,149 species and 65 habitats; the scale of change is partly due to there being more information available about UK biodiversity than there was when the exercise was last carried out in the 1990s.

With so many priorities to deal with it has been necessary to move away from the previous approach, of creating an Action Plan for each species and habitat, to a new 'signposting' approach that identifies actions required for each species, and then brigades them into various categories. That process is being undertaken by specialists under the leadership of BRIG with JNCC as chair and secretariat.

A project to identify Britain's most important geological sites, to ensure they are protected and conserved, continues to be a key commitment for JNCC. The Geological Conservation Review (GCR) of Britain has resulted in a series of publications, which will run to 45 volumes when completed.



Neil Ellis

JNCC Geoconservation Manager

The contribution that JNCC's Neil Ellis has made to geological conservation has been recognised by the Council of the Geological Society of London, which has awarded him with one of two 2008 Distinguished Service Awards. Neil leads the GCR process as Publications Manager.



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Northern Ireland has its equivalent in the Earth Sciences Conservation Review.

Each GCR volume describes sites worthy of conservation and in total the series will cover more than 3,000 locations. During the reporting year, volume 33, *Mass Movement*, was published, and volume 34, *Lewisian, Torridonian and Moine Rocks of Scotland*, was prepared for publication during 2008.

Alongside the production of the print series, JNCC is also making GCR information available through the web. At the end of the year, 13 volumes had been made available to users in this way.

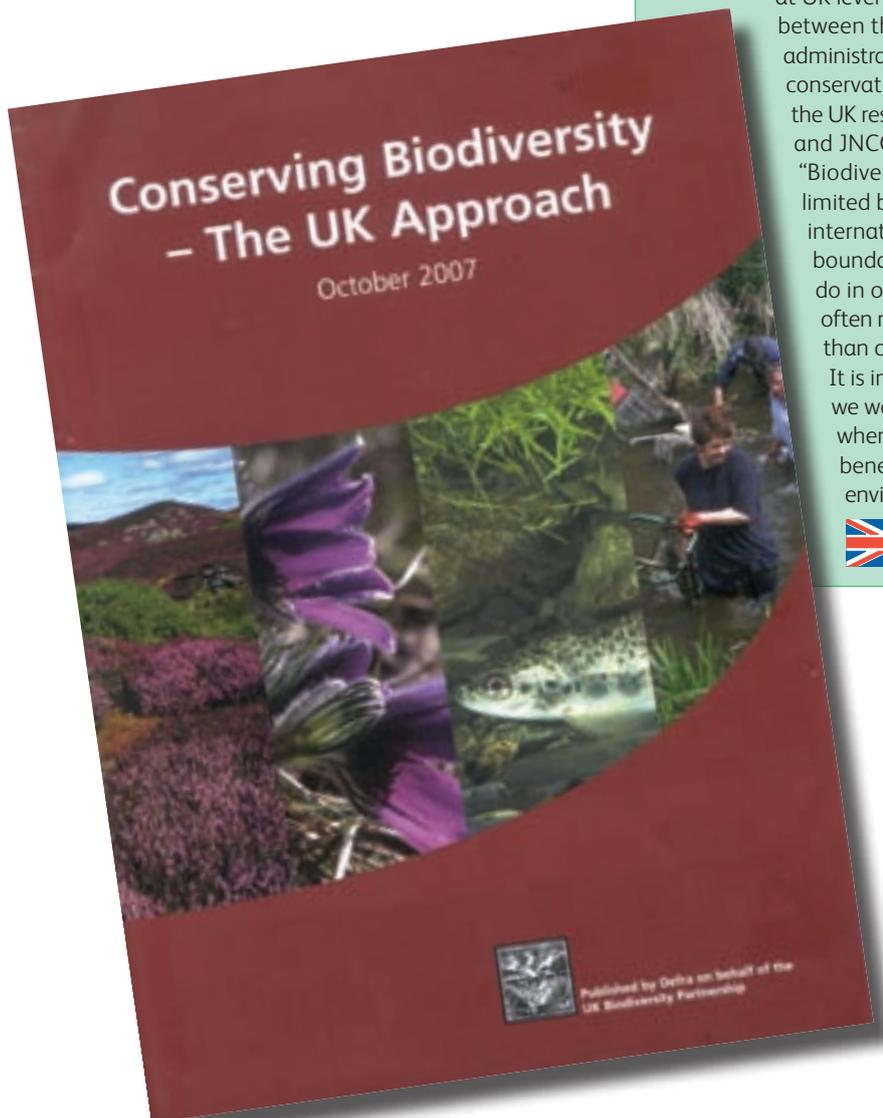


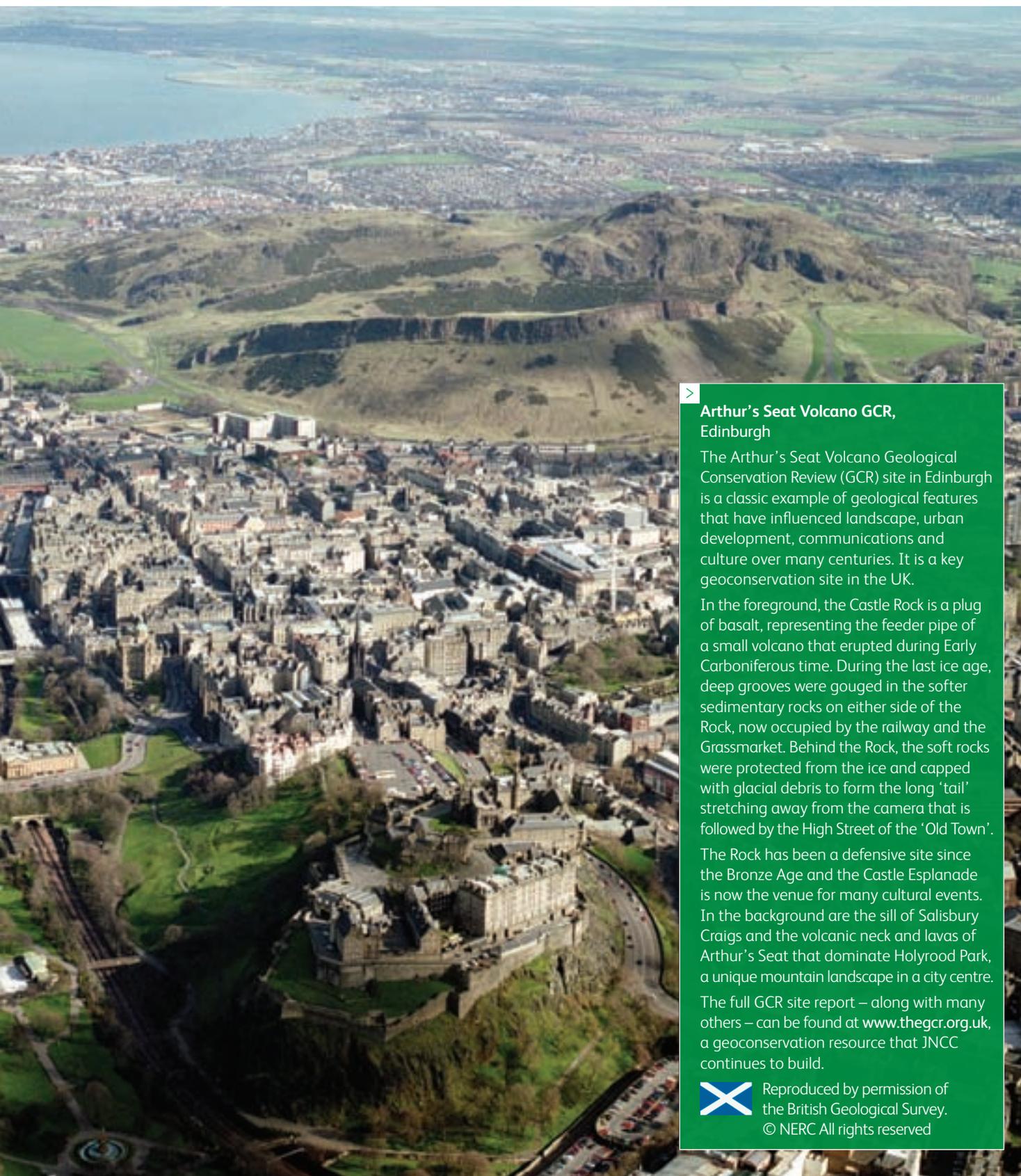
Conserving Biodiversity

Produced by Defra in 2007

The role of the UK under the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was clarified with the publication of **Conserving Biodiversity – The UK Approach** at the fifth UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference, Aviemore in October 2007. Prepared by the UK Biodiversity Standing Committee, the document sets out a vision for UK biodiversity, and explains roles within the UK BAP at UK, country and local levels.

The document notes that research and surveillance will be co-ordinated at UK level by a partnership between the four administrations, the UK conservation bodies, the UK research councils and JNCC. It adds: "Biodiversity is not limited by national or international political boundaries: what we do in one country is often relevant to more than one country. It is important that we work together where this will most benefit the natural environment."





> Arthur's Seat Volcano GCR, Edinburgh

The Arthur's Seat Volcano Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site in Edinburgh is a classic example of geological features that have influenced landscape, urban development, communications and culture over many centuries. It is a key geoconservation site in the UK.

In the foreground, the Castle Rock is a plug of basalt, representing the feeder pipe of a small volcano that erupted during Early Carboniferous time. During the last ice age, deep grooves were gouged in the softer sedimentary rocks on either side of the Rock, now occupied by the railway and the Grassmarket. Behind the Rock, the soft rocks were protected from the ice and capped with glacial debris to form the long 'tail' stretching away from the camera that is followed by the High Street of the 'Old Town'.

The Rock has been a defensive site since the Bronze Age and the Castle Esplanade is now the venue for many cultural events. In the background are the sill of Salisbury Craigs and the volcanic neck and lavas of Arthur's Seat that dominate Holyrood Park, a unique mountain landscape in a city centre.

The full GCR site report – along with many others – can be found at www.thegcr.org.uk, a geoconservation resource that JNCC continues to build.



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