

## State of the Countryside 2020

The State of the Countryside 2020 is the subject of a detailed report commissioned by the Countryside Agency. The State of the Countryside 2002, a summary of which was published by the Agency in April 2003, takes a long-term view of the future of the English countryside by asking

- Who will live in the countryside?
- How will the people earn their living?
- What will be the quality of life in the countryside?

and then presents four scenarios.

Available as a PDF or it may be purchased from the Agency for £2 (Countryside Agency Publications, PO Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7EP. Tel 0870 120 6466)

[www.countryside.gov.uk/EvidenceAndAnalysis/state\\_of\\_the\\_countryside\\_reports/SOCR2020.asp](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/EvidenceAndAnalysis/state_of_the_countryside_reports/SOCR2020.asp)

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## Woods to go native in Wales

In Wales we can expect to see a change of emphasis towards planting more native species of trees. The Woodland Trust claim in their newsletter [Broadleaf](#) that, in the last 50 years, almost half of the ancient woodland in Wales has been replaced by conifer plantations. However, the Forestry Commission who own much of these plantations are taking on board the findings of a review which advocates gradual return to native species. It is hoped that the restoration of ancient woodland in Wales will set an example to the rest of the UK.

## Hunting ban

The government is expected to again attempt to pass a law to ban hunting with dogs. However, disappointingly, a recent poll showed that only 2% of the public see a hunting ban as a top priority for the government.

## American twitch

The UK's first Baltimore Oriole for 15 years has been sighted in the past few weeks. The oriole, a distinctive orange-coloured, starling-sized bird has been causing a frenzy among twitchers in the Oxford area.

For the latest on this rare visitor's movements, take a look at [www.birdguides.com](http://www.birdguides.com)



## Farmers urged to make use of winter period

The Countryside Council for Wales [CCW] is urging Tir Gofal farmers to use the winter to tackle vital tasks on their farms. It is an opportunity to carry out hedgelaying, tree planting, stonewalling and pond building, while plants and animals are dormant for the winter.

## Tir Gofal programme judged a success

A total of 2,000 farms in Wales applied for the Tir Gofal programme in 2003 and it could take about three years to complete all the agreements. Tir Gofal's success means that no application windows are planned in the near future.

More details on both the above items can be found at the Countryside Council for Wales' website at: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

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## Christmas/New Year sponsored bird count

It's not too late to take part in the Christmas/New Year Sponsored Bird Count. Choose a day between 20 December and 4 January to get out and about and count the species you see, or simply count the birds in your garden and ask your friends and family to support your favourite pastime and help the BTO.

## Latest results from the Breeding Bird Survey

Between 1994 and 2002, willow tit and wood warbler declined by more than 50%, whereas greylag goose and stonechat numbers more than doubled.

More details on both the above items can be found at the British Trust for Ornithology [BTO] website at: [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)

### Articles or comments

Contributions to future issues welcome.

Got a point to make? Like something included in the next issue? Contact me by e-mail:

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