

Down to earth

Regina Ebner shares news of conservation work being undertaken by some of our Partners in Action.

Over the past few months, A Rocha UK has expanded its Target Ten initiative to include more declining species, as well as taxonomic groups (such as amphibians) and threatened habitats (such as coastal and grassland). 'Target 25', as it is now known, will ensure that we are helping the Partners in Action we work with to focus

on a wide range of places and species* that are struggling with climate change, habitat loss and pollution. We are also encouraging each Partner to use iRecord ([brc.ac.uk/irecord/](https://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/)) to monitor and list the species recorded as a way of measuring improvements in populations over the next few years.

Amphibians (T14)

Abernethy Barcaple in south-west Scotland have worked hard to create new habitats around the shores of their lochan. This is used for kayaking and canoeing, yet at the same time has become a brilliant space for dragonflies, damselflies, frogs and toads – showing that it's possible to have an adventure on the water whilst also creating nature-rich space for amphibians and insects. The site also has a well-established house martin colony: in some cases, the birds have nested on as well as in the newly-installed boxes!



Native wildflowers (T6)

Despite lockdown and limited access to volunteers, the small team at **St Madoc Centre** on the Gower has done an incredible job creating new space for wildflowers on the coastal headland. Around three acres of wildlife-rich meadow are now being carefully managed through a combination of grazing, cutting and hand control of bracken, benefitting at least 50 species of wildflower and grass, alongside numerous pollinating insects.

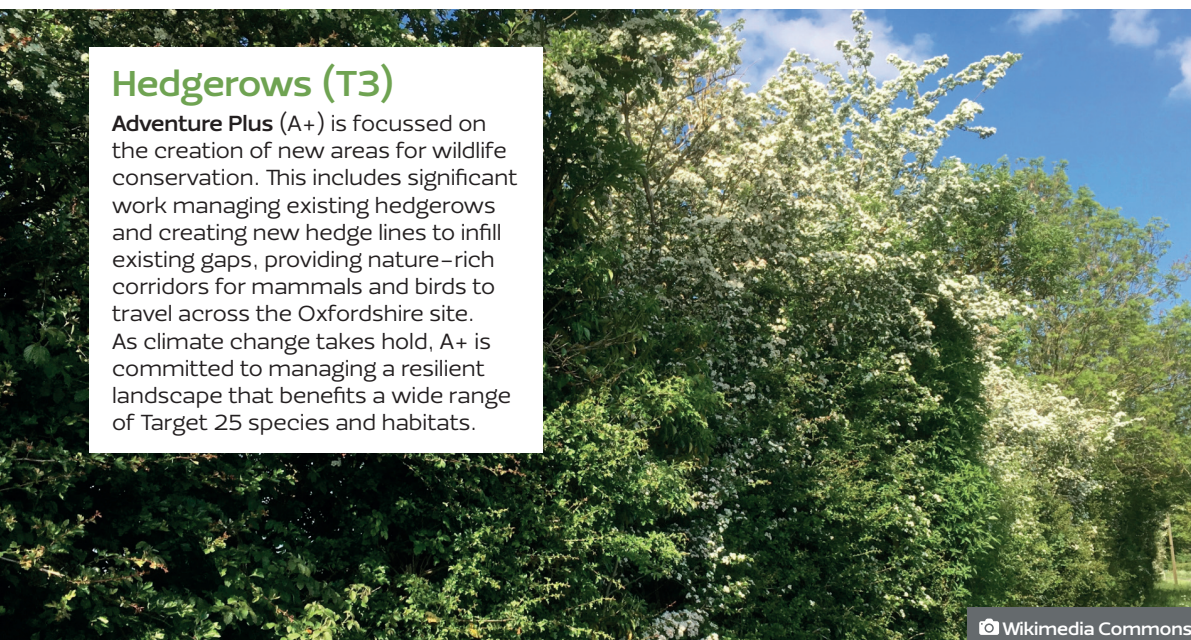


Grassland fungi (T12)

Stampwell Farm, Buckinghamshire, has a large area of ancient apple and plum orchards, interspersed with flowering meadows full of orchids and a wide range of other grassland species. Many of the standing trees have died, and the rare combination of rotting wood on the ground with trees that are still standing has created a space abounding in grassland and woodland fungi, providing opportunities for foraging as well as a food source for insects and mammals.

Hedgerows (T3)

Adventure Plus (A+) is focussed on the creation of new areas for wildlife conservation. This includes significant work managing existing hedgerows and creating new hedge lines to infill existing gaps, providing nature-rich corridors for mammals and birds to travel across the Oxfordshire site. As climate change takes hold, A+ is committed to managing a resilient landscape that benefits a wide range of Target 25 species and habitats.



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Bats (T11)

Tinhay Retreat Centre is one of our newest Partners in the South West and is already creating new spaces for wildlife. From some incredible nature-rich meadows to a new beehive, the place is buzzing with life! Exciting new additions are bat boxes, to help support a growing population of pipistrelle bats. More new boxes will be put up over the next months, in the hope that a really significant bat population can be encouraged to thrive.



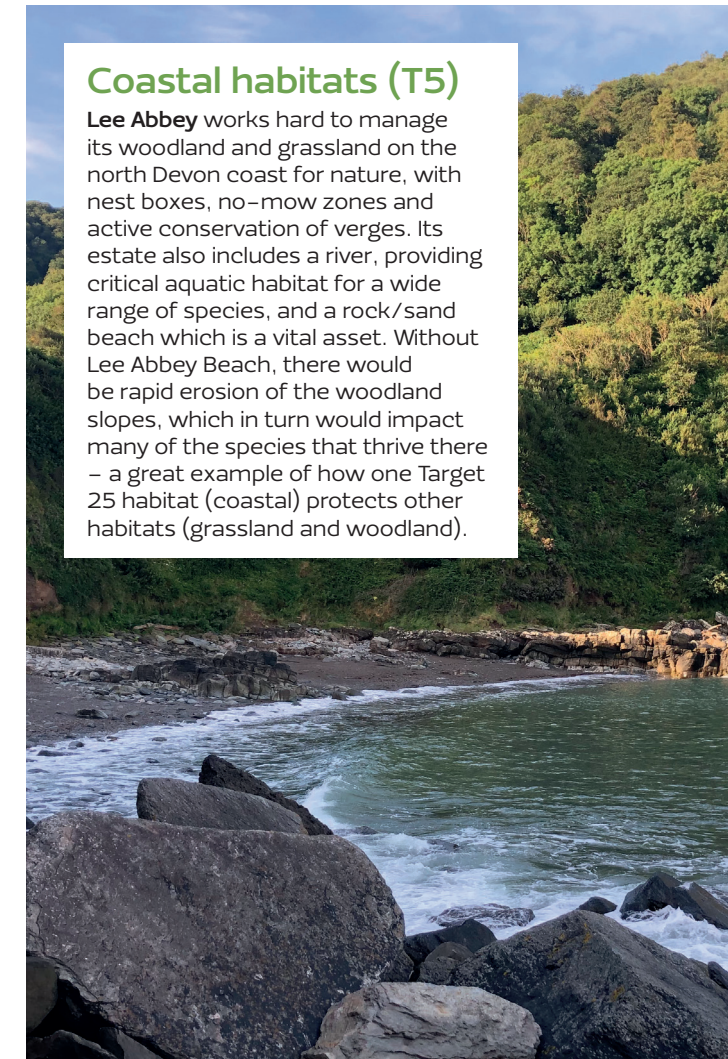
Common swift (T22)

Common swifts are a key Target 25 species and are in decline across the country. **Ashburnham Place** in East Sussex has become the first Partner in Action to put up new swift boxes. It is hoped that the development of high-quality wetland and grassland areas will provide good sources of water and insects for the swifts, and Ashburnham will be monitoring the boxes for new visitors over the next few springs.

Piotr Szczypa

Coastal habitats (T5)

Lee Abbey works hard to manage its woodland and grassland on the north Devon coast for nature, with nest boxes, no-mow zones and active conservation of verges. Its estate also includes a river, providing critical aquatic habitat for a wide range of species, and a rock/sand beach which is a vital asset. Without Lee Abbey Beach, there would be rapid erosion of the woodland slopes, which in turn would impact many of the species that thrive there – a great example of how one Target 25 habitat (coastal) protects other habitats (grassland and woodland).



Photos by **Regina Ebner**, Partners in Action Coordinator, unless otherwise credited.

*Number in sub-headings (T6, T14, etc) indicates Target 25 species or habitat listing.