

## Getting Hotter: the effect of Climate Change on Wildlife in Gloucestershire and the UK

Lecture by Dr Anne Goodenough – University of Gloucestershire

Dr Goodenough's lecture was based on her work as an ecologist researching the effects of climate change on the lifestyles and breeding habits of wildlife in the UK and overseas and in particular those relating to birds. The basic theme of her talk dealt with both the spatial and temporal effects of climate change. In the case of the former changing climate can force wildlife to move their territory Northwards, Southwards or indeed remain where they were while in the case of the latter Dr Goodenough's research has involved a detailed study of changes to birds' first nesting dates.

There will be winners and losers. The increasing day-length tells a migratory bird that it is time to leave Africa and start a family in the UK. Here, it needs to catch food for its young – but the changing UK climate will determine abundance of prey species directly or via the availability of food lower down the food chain. Species that are generalists, flexible and easily able to move home range, might inherit space that has become unwelcoming to the specialists dependent on intricate balances in the ecological web. For the "at risk" species, should we just protect their current home – or should we now think about protecting the areas where we expect them to end up?

The tales of ecology are fascinating in themselves, but careful collection and interpretation of observations are necessary before one can start applying our understanding to mitigate the consequences of climate change that are undoubtedly coming our way. We rely on people like Dr Goodenough, prepared to carry a ladder and regularly visit 400 nest boxes in a Gloucestershire wood, to gather the data. We also rely on excellent communicators such as Dr Goodenough to explain why this is important to all of us. We can only marvel that she also leaves us entertained *and* informed.