

# Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is our life.



## Celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity 2010

2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) by the United Nations.

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life in an ecosystem, or on the Earth as a whole. The greater the variety of plant and animal life, the healthier the ecosystem. These ecosystems provide us with food, fuel, health, wealth and other services vital to our well-being.

We form part of the Earth's biodiversity and yet our activities are destroying it at an alarming rate. Throughout 2010 the partnership organisations of the International Year of Biodiversity will be promoting the importance of safeguarding biodiversity and indeed our very existence! Much has been lost already, but we can do a lot to prevent further degradation if we act now.

It is not all doom and gloom, though. There are many success stories and Conservation Grade's *Nature Friendly Farming* is one of them.



The *Nature Friendly Farming* system encourages farmers to think about the biodiversity on their farms and manage the land in way that increases the variety of plant and animal life present. The farmers do this by creating and maintaining specific wildlife habitats over a significant proportion of their farmed land, such as a pollen and nectar mix to encourage pollinating insects, or an area of plants tailored to provide food for wild birds during the harsh winter months.

Generally, those farmers who adopt Conservation Grade's *Nature Friendly Farming* system already have an interest in conservation and are participating in the Government's environmental stewardship schemes. *Nature Friendly Farming* takes this commitment to biodiversity further. The areas of each habitat and the seed mixtures recommended in the Conservation Grade protocol are scientifically backed to ensure a positive impact on wildlife while safeguarding commercial viability.

These habitats are regularly assessed by an independent assessor and advice is given on improving them if necessary. The farms are audited annually to ensure compliance with the Conservation Grade Protocol.

Conservation Grade is pleased to be part of the UK partnership of the International Year of Biodiversity. Follow this link to read more about Conservation Grade's success story <http://www.biodiversityislife.net/?q=node/67>.