

wildlifematters

Spring 2019



Herts and
Middlesex

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE TRUST AND FROM AROUND THE UK

Brilliant beetles

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six-legged fab four **24**



» RESERVE EXTENDED

Frogmore Meadows
triples in size **5**

» STARS OF THE NIGHT

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secretive bats **10**

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Stag beetle ©
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CONSERVATION



Stars of the night

Discover one of our most secretive nocturnal hunters!
More on **10**

© TOM MARSHALL

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Find out what lives in and around your hedge.



From the Chief Executive

I'm very pleased to be able to introduce this edition of Wildlife Matters with the wonderful news about new land coming under the care of the Trust at Frogmore Meadows. This is thanks to the very generous legacy left to the Trust by Gerald Salisbury who was a volunteer warden of the reserve for many years and who loved the site.



This exciting news comes at a critical time for wildlife in the UK. In December last year, the draft new Environment Bill was published alongside a policy note setting out the Government's ambitions for part two of the Bill. Sadly,

in their current form these fall well short of what is needed. We need the proposed environmental watchdog to be much more independent and able to hold the whole Government to account. It is also vital that the Bill makes it a statutory requirement to produce Nature Recovery Network

maps to influence decisions around built development and farming in order to ensure that wildlife is taken into account.

Over the past months, I have contacted all our MPs to ask them to stand up for wildlife and make sure that the legislation is sufficiently robust. A number of MPs have joined us out on site at our reserves to see the work that we are doing and to understand the impact that wildlife legislation has.

You can make a difference by adding your voice. The Wildlife Trusts have launched the Wilder Future national campaign to encourage our supporters to contact their MPs and ask them to stand up for wildlife and create

a bold visionary piece of legislation proportionate to the vast environmental challenge we face. Unless Ministers and MPs improve upon this draft Bill, we will continue to see a decline in our wildlife and the health of our ecosystems for generations to come. Contacting your MP is very easy and we've created some helpful tips.



Find out how you can support the Wilder Future campaign at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wilderfuture

Thank you for your continued support of the Trust and your help for local wildlife.

Lesley Davies

Tony Juniper at University of Hertfordshire

Writer, environmental activist and President of the Wildlife Trusts, Tony Juniper will give his talk on 'Can the UK be a world leader? How a new Environment Act could help save the planet' at the

University of Hertfordshire from 7pm on April 2nd. The event is free to attend, but booking is essential.



Book your place online at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events

Wilder
FUTURE

Can you help uncover Hertfordshire's Natural History?

Herts Environmental Records Centre has partnered with Hertfordshire Natural History Society to digitise nearly 150 years' worth of records.

The Society's historic journals, which date back to the 1870s, are currently only available in paper format. The project will make them available freely to the general public through a fully searchable web database. Herts

Environmental Records Centre (HERC), which is hosted by the Trust, has developed bespoke text recognition software to scan the journals and is now looking for volunteers to help complete this project. A small portion of the text cannot be recognised automatically and needs to be looked at and filled in manually.



If you can spare some time and want to help, please get in touch with Ian Carle at ian.carle@hmwt.org or 01727 858 901.



Frogmore Meadows triples in size!

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has purchased land adjacent to its existing Frogmore Meadows Nature Reserve. The enlarged nature reserve, which sits in the Chess Valley, now covers 25 acres – three times the size of the original site.

The purchase was made possible from a generous legacy left to the Trust by Gerald Salisbury, who passed away in 2015. Gerald had been a long-term volunteer warden at Frogmore Meadows and was instrumental in helping the Trust care for the meadows. As recognition of his dedication to the site, the Trust has named the original reserve 'Gerald's Meadow'.

The extended nature reserve comprises rare water meadows and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Trust has been managing the original nature reserve since 1985 using traditional



meadow-management techniques including grazing and haymaking.

Frogmore Meadows sits in a floodplain and the soils found there, when managed correctly, support an abundance of meadow grasses, orchids and wildflowers. In summer, Frogmore Meadows is awash with beautiful flowers which are an important food source for many insects such as bees and butterflies.



Find out more and plan your visit by visiting hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves

Quack-Nav!

The Trust has fitted ducks with GPS trackers to shed light on how they use reservoirs and lakes in Greater London.

The project is thought to be the first of its kind and aims to provide information on the activities of the wintering wildfowl – where they feed, where they roost, when they move and what routes they use.

Four ducks have so far been tagged at Rye Meads Nature Reserve in the Lea Valley near Hoddesdon and the project is expected to expand to further water bodies in the Colne Valley and near Heathrow.

The ducks have been fitted with GPS trackers which will allow researchers to track their movements remotely as they move between water bodies in the Greater London area. The project, which is a partnership between the Trust, Environment Agency, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and Thames Water, will help identify which water bodies are most important and will help researchers understand how best to manage these sites for waterfowl.



Find out more on hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news



Male gadwall at Rye Meads with GPS tag

New report shows nature-friendly farming boosts wildlife

Farmers, the guardians of nearly three-quarters of land in the UK, have an essential role to play in wildlife conservation. A new report from The Wildlife Trusts shows how locally tailor-made farm wildlife plans, devised by Wildlife Trust advisors such as the Trust's Planning & Biodiversity Manager Matt Dodds, are helping wildlife recover.

Farming has shaped our countryside for centuries and in the UK, over 70% of our land is used for farming. With such a large proportion of land under their care, farmers are crucial for wildlife conservation. For our local wildlife to thrive, we must make room for conservation alongside the essential functions of food production.

In recent years, the cereal company Jordans Dorset Ryvita have committed to doing just that: A partnership between Jordans and The Wildlife Trusts requires their farmers to manage at least ten per cent of farmland for wildlife.



Guy Tucker

Farms in the scheme work with their local Wildlife Trust to help ensure that local wildlife is cared for alongside the day-to-day running of the farm. Many farms in the scheme do far more than the minimum. Last year, Jordans oat growers farmed over 15,500 hectares, providing almost 4,600 hectares for wildlife.

Guy Tucker, who farms 219 hectares at Greenhall Farm near Hertford, is one of over 40 cereal farmers supplying oats to Jordans. A third-generation farmer, Guy didn't feel comfortable with the way that the farm was being managed. He felt it could do more to give back to the landscape that had given his family a livelihood for decades. He started supporting wildlife on his land back in 2003, so it was a natural step to join the Jordans Farm Partnership.

All this has paid off for Guy and for wildlife in Hertfordshire. Following a farmland bird survey, he was delighted to discover that over winter, his farm boasted the largest flock of linnets ever recorded in Hertfordshire. This is particularly impressive given that linnets



are on the Red List of Threatened Species and in severe decline in England.

"I am a happier person as I see wildlife increasing on the farm. My father ploughed up hedges, but I'm planting them. Through the JFP conservation scheme, the input of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has been invaluable, targeting improvements for species that are relevant to this area, in a practical and achievable way," says Guy Tucker.

Not only are the birds returning, but Jordans farms are also fluttering with butterflies, buzzing with bees and jumping with mammals. From bats and barn owls to brown hares, nature is thriving in the hedgerows, field margins and ponds, establishing vital corridors to enable wild animals to spread out and move through the landscape. Wild bird seed plots are sown to provide food for farmland birds, winter stubble is also left in fields for corn bunting, linnets and tree sparrow. Long grass has been allowed to grow around field edges, encouraging voles to thrive and provide good hunting grounds for barn owls. Grass margins

also support insects that feed on crop pests. Insect larvae are food for partridge, lapwing and yellowhammer chicks. The scheme helps create bigger, better and more joined up spaces for wildlife to thrive.

As Planning & Biodiversity Manager Matt Dodds serves as an advisor for the Jordans farmers in Hertfordshire. Every farm is different and as such, each farm needs a bespoke approach to conservation management. This ensures that the individual plans are meaningful and relevant to that farm and its location within the wider landscape.

Successful farms need thriving wildlife because crops depend on pollination, natural pest control and healthy soils – all these underpin our ability to grow food in the future. The Jordans Farm Partnership demonstrates that we don't have to choose between wildlife and profitable food production.



Here's what we're achieving

The Jordans Farm Partnership with The Wildlife Trusts assigns an advisor to each farm from the local Wildlife Trust. Using their expertise on the local area, the advisors develop a bespoke farm plan, focussing on key species and habitats relevant to the farm's local landscape.

Total area of habitat
4,580 hectares

Total area of farmed land
15,500 hectares



- 954 hectares of woodland
- 768 km hedgerows
- 131 km of waterways
- 94 wildlife ponds



Knowing where species go helps conservation groups to protect them

Goose migration secrets revealed

New research shows how brent geese get to Siberia

How do the UK's 91,000 dark-bellied brent geese migrate to their summer breeding grounds in Siberia? Research at Essex Wildlife Trust's Blue House Farm reserve is finding out. In January 2018, experts from the Southern Colour Ringing group, licenced by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), ringed the legs of 18 geese on the reserve, to help track their 5,000-mile

round trip. Individuals were recorded in the Netherlands and the Baltics as they flew east. Last winter, several were spotted back in Essex. The Wildlife Trusts work with the BTO to monitor migrant birds on many of our reserves, which are important feeding grounds. Studies like this demonstrate the need for a global approach to conservation.



Research shows the geese migrate to Siberia via the Netherlands and Baltics

DAVID TIPPLING/2020VISION



Barry Sheerman MP meets Moustafa Atta and Liam Jackson of Sheffield WT

60 MPs make time to meet The Wildlife Trusts' young stars

Last November, the Wildlife Trusts hosted a Parliamentary Reception in Westminster. Over 60 MPs attended to meet our young staff, trainees and volunteers. It was a chance for our young stars to highlight the need for an ambitious Environment Bill. Georgina Umney of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust said in a speech: "Everyone has

the right to freely access and defend the natural world. No young person can avoid being an environmentalist as it is defining our future." Stephanie Hilborne OBE, Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts said: "Young people are a vital part of our movement. They want to guarantee a more positive future for our natural environment."

CHRIS WOOD

Farming and Fisheries Bills need more work

As part of the arrangements for leaving the EU, MPs and Peers have recently debated both a new Fisheries Bill and a new Agriculture Bill for England. These two key parts of the legal Brexit jigsaw will have a significant impact on the health of our natural environment on land and at sea. On the Agriculture Bill, we have worked hard to ensure there will be long-term funding at the right level to restore and reconnect wildlife habitats on farms, and to create a Nature Recovery Network. On the Fisheries Bill, we have



Work by The Wildlife Trusts will ensure UK fishing is sustainable

sought to strengthen its sustainability objectives to ensure a healthy marine environment.

TOBY ROXBOROUGH/2020VISION



Farm subsidies will enable farmers to reconnect habitats

KATHY DEWITT/LAMY

HS2 dooms 19 ancient woods



HS2's proposals pay little heed to the amount of nature the project will engulf

HS2's newest phase, due to connect Crewe to Manchester and the West Midlands to Leeds, offers 'derisory' consideration of wildlife, The Wildlife Trusts said in a consultation last year. The 176 miles of track will seriously damage 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 111 Local Wildlife Sites and 19 ancient woodlands. "HS2 Ltd's work lacks sufficient proposals to compensate for nature's loss," says Katherine Hawkins, Senior Living Landscapes Officer. "We have challenged it to create and restore more wild places than are being destroyed and damaged, and to save irreplaceable wetlands and woodlands."

ARUP

Red squirrels more diverse than thought

The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales have discovered new genetic diversity in the mid-Wales red squirrel population. Analysis of hairs left on sticky pads in a feeding station has identified a unique sequence of DNA. This is great news for the squirrels, as it means their diversity is better than scientists thought. That variation will help them adapt to changing environments. The research was part of the Mid Wales Red Squirrel Project, a branch of Red Squirrels United.



The study obtained DNA from hairs stuck to sticky pads in the feeder

PAUL HARRY

A new home for bees

Solitary bee homes are hard to find in modern gardens, but an ingenious solution – the bee brick – can turn a wall into a bee hotel. Bee bricks are full of holes in which solitary bees can lay their eggs. They can be used on their own, or built into a wall. Last summer, The Wildlife Trusts' Adam Cormack fitted a bee brick to his house. Six months later he found several bees in residence. Adam shared his find on Twitter and more than 46,000 people 'liked' his tweet. Individual actions like this are key to creating a wilder future.



A red mason bee (an excellent fruit tree pollinator) investigates a brick

GREEN & BLUE



Stars of the night

As the nights are getting shorter and warmer, silent hunters will emerge from their hibernation roosts and dart through the nocturnal landscape. Communications Officer Frieda meets our mysterious bats.



A dark creature emerging from the shadow, afraid of the sun and sucking your blood – this is often the first association that comes to mind for some people when thinking about bats. Bats have been suffering from a bad reputation for centuries, not just since Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. This is an unfair and untrue judgement and bats are, in fact, incredibly important for our ecosystem.

Their secretive nature makes research into their habits a real challenge, but bats are as fascinating as they are mysterious. When hunting at night, they rely completely on their excellent hearing to find their prey via echolocation. They emit high-pitched calls – too high for all but the most sensitive human ears – and the returning echo creates a 'sound map' of their surroundings, including the size, shape and direction of an object or potential prey. Contrary to popular belief, they are not 'blind as a bat',

their eyesight is actually very good for a nocturnal animal.

There are over 1,000 bat species in the world, the second largest order after rodents. Of those, only three bat species actually feed on blood, but their size of under 10cm doesn't live up to the horror movie stereotype. Most species feed on insects, some on fruits. This makes them both important pest controllers and pollinators. Around 500 different plants such as mango, banana or cocoa rely on bats to pollinate their flowers. There would be no Tequila nor chocolate if it weren't for bat pollination!

Unlike many other small mammals, bats can live for up to 30 years and some even longer. Their long life is believed to be down to the way they are able to control their metabolism and heart rate to save energy. When they do not need to

be active they enter into a sort of suspended animation (torpor and hibernation) and slow down their bodily processes to a bare minimum, dropping their body temperature to a few degrees Celsius. This adaptation is critical in helping them survive cold winters when little or no insect prey is available. Only two other mammals in the UK are considered true hibernators: hedgehogs and dormice. It is believed that in autumn, they seek out cool, stable temperature environments such as caves or hollow trees to spend the winter months, only waking up occasionally. However, very few bats are ever seen in winter, so little is known about where they spend the cold season.

Bats are the only true flying mammal in the world. Other animals that are said to be able to fly – such as the American flying squirrel – are actually just gliding, not able to sustain flight.



Common pipistrelle

© TOM MARSHALL

Bats in Hertfordshire and Middlesex

There are 17 species of bats in the UK, 12 of which can be found in our area. You will most likely come across a **common pipistrelle**, but they are difficult to distinguish from **soprano pipistrelle** or the rare **Nathusius' pipistrelle**. Even bat experts need to take a very close look to tell them apart. Pipistrelle bats are our smallest bats with a wingspan of less than 25cm and the same weight as a 2p coin. Despite their tiny size, they can devour up to 3,000 insects in one night and Nathusius' fly here all the way from Latvia in Eastern Europe.

The UK's largest bat is the **noctule** with a wingspan of up to 40cm and a weight of around 40g. Noctules can be seen flying high over the tree canopy looking for their favourite food, flying beetles, such as the large cockchafer. The lesser noctule, or **Leisler's bat**, flies fast and high near the treetops, but you might also spot it flying around lamp posts, looking for insects attracted to the light.

Daubenton's and **Natterer's** bats are medium-sized, with stable populations across Europe. Both were named after famous naturalists, Louis-Jean-Marie Daubenton and Johann Natterer. The **Brandt's** bat is a small shaggy-furred bat that is very similar to the **whiskered** bat. It can be found throughout most of Europe

and Asia but is rare in Hertfordshire. It is known for its extraordinary life expectancy relative to its body size. In 2005, a specimen of 41 years was discovered in Siberia making it the oldest bat ever recorded.

Serotine bats are 'early risers' and they are usually the first ones out in the evening. This species often roosts in older buildings and chimneys. It can only be found in the south of England in small numbers but is widespread in Europe and large parts of Asia. The UK's most endangered bat species is the **barbastelle** with only a handful of known roosts across the country. It has very specific habitat requirements for roosting and foraging which contribute to its low population status. It prefers to roost behind the peeling bark of veteran oak trees within the shaded interior of ancient woodland, which is not a common environment making it harder for the barbastelle to find suitable roosts.

The **brown long-eared** bat does live up to its name, as its ears can grow almost as long as its body! Its flight is relatively slow compared to other bat species and, in addition to catching its prey on the wing, the brown long-eared bat flies carefully through foliage, picking insects directly from leaves.



Bats are good *indicator species*, serving as a measurement of how well wildlife is faring and how well conservation efforts are working because they occupy a wide range of habitats and are sensitive to changes in the environment.

Whilst bats and their roosts are protected through legislation, it is vital that we find out more about where they are found in our area and ensure that the habitats they rely on are secure for the future.

The Trust recognises their importance and is running several projects to find out more about these elusive creatures and learn how to best support them in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

A Wetland Vision for Bats

This project, made possible by additional mitigation funding from High Speed 2, aims to monitor and improve the population of Nathusius' pipistrelle in the Colne Valley. The Nathusius' pipistrelle is a very rare species with only a handful

of maternity roosts ever recorded in the UK, and as such is a priority species for the Trust.

The project involves detailed monitoring of the bats through dedicated monitoring stations, radio tracking and remote acoustic monitoring with the help of specialist equipment and skilled volunteers. We have been able to record a lot of activity at lakes in the area and have even tracked a bat to a mating roost! The data produced in this project will be shared with site managers, local records centres, the Bat Conservation Trust and international partners to inform our knowledge of the ecology of the species and guide ongoing conservation effort.

Hertfordshire Barbastelle Bat Project

In partnership with Herts & Middlesex Bat Group, the Hertfordshire Barbastelle Bat Project aims to increase our knowledge of this incredibly rare bat's

distribution in the county. With only a small number of known breeding roosts, the barbastelle is one of rarest and most endangered mammals in the UK.

Together with volunteers, The Trust has surveyed a series of woodlands, deployed remote bat detectors, installed bat boxes and trapped, ringed and radio-tagged several barbastelles. Last year, a brand-new maternity colony was found – only the second ever recorded in Hertfordshire. Hundreds of new records provide the Trust and its partners with further insights about the barbastelle population in Hertfordshire and how their habitat can best be conserved and enhanced. This year and further in the future, the project aims to find more maternity colonies to get a better idea about the status and distribution of barbastelle in Hertfordshire.



Find out more about these bat projects on hertswildlifetrust.co.uk/conservation-projects

Learn more about these fantastic beasts!

Join one of our bat events this year!

Bats of Stocker's Lake
Thursday 11 July
Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Bat Discovery Walk
Friday 9 August
Hilfield Park Reservoir

Bat Discovery
Friday 13 September
Rye Meads

Bats from the Boat River Cruise
Wednesday 30 October
Ware Town Quay



Book your space now on hertswildlifetrust.co.uk/events



Turn your garden into a bat haven



Like many other species, bats are suffering from habitat loss, but some species are adaptable and can be found roosting and foraging in residential areas.

Bats don't build nests but rely on roof spaces or cracks and crevices in buildings for roosting. In fact, they are a good sign of a healthy habitat in your neighbourhood! With our top tips, you can easily make your garden bat-friendly.

1. Plant night-scented flowers

These will attract night-flying insects and provide food for hungry bats at night, for example evening-primrose, honeysuckle, white jasmine or sweet rocket. Generally, a garden that is good for insects is good for bats.

2. Build a pond

Fresh water is a crucial resource for bats. Not only do they drink from open water surfaces, they also forage on emerging insects that have aquatic larvae. If you're short on space, a small water feature will do.

3. Put up a bat box

A bat box will provide a safe place for your bats to roost, raise their young and sleep during the day. You can build one yourself or buy one. Hang it as high as possible in a sheltered sunny place near to the cover of a tree or hedgerow.

4. Reduce artificial lighting

Bats are nocturnal and naturally shy away from light. Try to remove or reduce artificial light sources in your garden so that bats can visit undisturbed. Make sure there is no light spill onto your bat box.

5. Keep your cat indoors at night

Cats are a big threat to bats in residential areas. Try to keep your cat in at night or, if this is not possible, try to keep it inside around sunset when bats emerge from their roosts.

6. Get a bat detector

Bat detectors make echolocation calls audible to the human ear and will give you a whole new level of appreciation and enjoyment of these fantastic little mammals.

7. Volunteer

Join like-minded people to find out more about bats by volunteering for the Trust or Herts & Middlesex Bat Group. It might ignite a life-long passion and a journey of discovery. Get in touch with Matt Dodds on Matt.Dodds@hmwt.org or 01727 858 901



Noctule

©TOM MARSHALL



Brown long-eared bat © TOM MARSHALL



Go Wild Events

We are delighted to be offering a huge range of events over the year from workshops to walks, with something for all ages. Discover new activities and our top picks near you.

Booking is essential for all our events and places are snapped up quickly! Don't delay and book your place today! Visit hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events for full listings and booking.

Get Closer to Nature

Discover our nature reserves and further afield on one of our ever popular donation-based guided walks. Improve your identification knowledge or just enjoy a stroll in the fresh air. This is just a small selection of the variety of events found on our website. Don't forget to book your place!

Saturday 13 April | 10am - 12pm

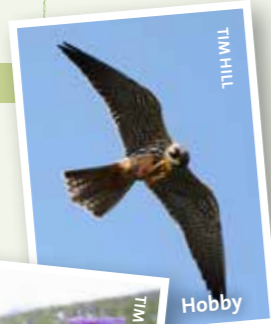
Springtime at Thorley

THORLEY WASH NATURE RESERVE
Join us for a walk around Thorley Wash Nature Reserve to enjoy the sights and sounds of this special area, as we move into spring. Learn about and possibly see some of the residents and seasonal visitors such as warblers and water voles and look out for other signs of spring.

Saturday 20 April | 9.30am - 11.30am

Pasqueflowers

THERFIELD HEATH
Come on a walk to hopefully see a carpet of the delicate nodding purple Pasqueflowers, a rare flower restricted to a couple of chalk grassland sites in Herts. We will also be listening and looking out for the first signs of spring, hoping to hear a chiffchaff or see a brimstone butterfly.



Hobby



Pasqueflower

Sunday 28 April | 10am - 12pm

Discover Bluebells at Gobions Wood

GOBIONS WOOD NATURE RESERVE
Discover this beautiful nature reserve on a guided walk around the woods, enjoying the bluebells and other spring flowers found at this special time of year.

Saturday 4 May | 10.30am - 1.30pm

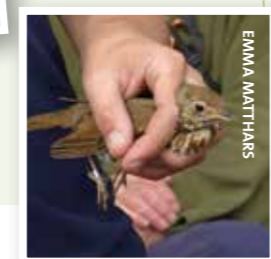
The Natural History of Rayners Lane

HARROW
Take a guided three-mile walk through suburbia, a formal park and finish in Roxbourne Rough, a beautiful nature reserve and urban survivor.

Monday 20 May | 7pm - 9pm

Evening Bird Walk

TRING RESERVOIRS
Explore Wilstone Reservoir with us and spot and identify the summer migrant birds that can often be found here. We'll be hoping to catch a glimpse of a hobby out hunting!



EMMA MATTHIAS

Tuesday 28 May | 6.30pm - 8.30pm

Woodland Wildflower Walk

WELWYN GARDEN CITY
Enjoy an easy two-mile walk around Harmer Green with volunteers from Mid-Herts Local Group, identifying woodland wildflowers along the way.

Sunday 2 June | 11am - 1pm

Spring Butterfly Discovery

ALDBURY NOWERS NATURE RESERVE
Join us to search for an array of spring downland and woodland butterflies including grizzled skipper, dingy skipper and green hairstreak. Learn how to identify different butterflies and their individual lifecycles.



ANDREW CARR

Saturday 15 June | 10am - 12pm

Dragons and Orchids

AMWELL NATURE RESERVE
Join us on a morning stroll to look for dragonflies such as the hairy dragonfly and orchids such as the early marsh and common spotted.

Saturday 6 July | 8.30am - 9.30am or 9.30am - 10.30am

Bird Ringing

PANSHANGER PARK
This is a fantastic opportunity to join the experts to learn more about this fascinating aspect of ornithological study and see birds up close and personal. Families with children welcome.



Hedgehog

ION HAWKINS SUREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

Wednesday 24 April, Saturday 29 June plus two more dates | Times vary

Smartphone Safaris

ST ALBANS
Learn to use your smartphone to take stunning wildlife photographs with professional photographer, Jeanette. If you own a smartphone, then you own a camera and if you own a camera, you have the ability to take amazing photos. You'll take a stroll through Verulamium Park, learning how to take photographs of the plants, flowers, trees and landscape along the way. There will be a variety of macro lenses to try out too. £15 per person

Monday 6 May and 22 July | 2pm

The Grove Formal Gardens Tour and Cream Tea

CHANDLERS CROSS, WATFORD
Enjoy a gentle stroll around the beautiful formal gardens guided by The Grove's Senior Gardener. After the tour, lasting approximately 1.5 hours, you will return to the historic heart of The Grove, where the Earls of Clarendon threw lavish house parties for the likes of Queen Victoria and Horace Walpole, for a sumptuous cream tea. £39 per person

Tuesday 2 April | 6.30pm - 9pm

Tony Juniper: Can the UK be a World Leader in Providing a Wilder Future?

HATFIELD
Join Tony Juniper, campaigner, writer, sustainability adviser and environmentalist, for a talk examining the challenges faced by wildlife and the environment in the UK. **FREE**

Wednesday 10 April, 17 April, 29 May plus six more dates | 2pm - 3pm

Discover Hedgehogs

HARPENDEN
Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are delighted to be working in partnership with Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary to offer this two-hour hedgehog workshop. Learn basic hedgehog facts - where they live, what they eat, problems facing hedgehogs and why they're in decline.

Receive practical advice about how to help hedgehogs in your garden and find out about basic hedgehog care. £8 adults (over 16), £6 children. Children must be accompanied by a paying adult.

Saturday 25 May, 8 June, 22 June plus three more dates | 10am - 3pm

Introduction to Beekeeping Workshop

TEWIN ORCHARD NATURE RESERVE
This one-day introductory workshop will give you an overview of the craft of beekeeping. The morning will be spent in local pub the Rose and Crown, learning the basic theory of beekeeping, looking at the equipment and discussing the role of the beekeeper. After a delicious pub lunch, head to the orchard's apiary for an informative session of practical beekeeping. £59 per person



The Grove

Tuesday 11 June and Thursday 5 September | 7pm - 10pm

Wild Gin Tasting

WILSTONE RESERVOIR NATURE RESERVE
Take an early evening stroll around Wilstone Reservoir, discovering this beautiful nature reserve with your knowledgeable guide. You will be looking out for wildfowl on the water and if we're lucky, spotting hobbies hunting over the fields, before returning to the nearby Puddingstone Distillery for a fascinating talk from their Director, Ben, who will give an insight into the history of gin and how the special Himalayan balsam gin is made. The evening wouldn't be complete without trying a couple of delicious cocktails from the gin menu along with some samples. This event is truly a "wild" gin tasting! £25 per person. Over 18s only.

Saturday 22 June | 11am - 2pm

Traditional Meadow Management Workshop

FROGMORE MEADOWS NATURE RESERVE
An introduction to traditional methods of meadow management used to improve botanical interest. Learn the safe and efficient use of a traditional scythe and how to bale hay without the use of mechanisation. Discover why mid-summer mowing to cut and remove vegetation after peak flowering is important for wildflower meadows. £10 per person. Suitable for adults only.

Thursday 13 August | 11am - 2.30pm

Wonderful Wildfowl: Behind the Scenes Tour, Lunch and Walk

TRING NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
Take an exclusive behind the scenes tour of Tring Natural History Museum with their expert bird curators. After the hour's tour, enjoy lunch in the museum's cafe. Regroup after lunch in the car park next to Wilstone Reservoir, where the Trust's Volunteer Warden will take you for a walk around the nature reserve, spotting the wildfowl found here and keeping a sharp eye open for the hobbies that can sometimes be seen hunting nearby. £20 per person. Suitable for adults only.

Wednesday 14 August | 10am - 12pm

River Lea Wildlife Cruise

WARE
Settle in for a 90-minute cruise on board Lee & Stort Boat Company's comfortable boat, equipped with toilet facilities and a fully stocked refreshments bar. We will cruise through Ware to the Lee Navigation, which passes the Trust's Amwell Nature Reserve. Along the way, learn about the river and navigation from our Living Rivers Officer. Find out what lies beneath the water, and spend time identifying the wildlife found along the water margins. Adults £15, children (under 16) £8, infants free (on adult's lap).



Wednesday 11 September | 7pm - 9pm

Dave Goulson "The Garden Jungle" Talk and Book Signing

ST ALBANS
Join us for an entertaining evening talk from renowned author of "A Sting in the Tail" and founder of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Professor Dave Goulson will reveal what lives in our compost piles, behind our trees' bark and beneath our lawns, and explain what we can do to increase biodiversity. His new book "The Garden Jungle: or Gardening to Save the Planet", is due for publication in July 2019 and Prof Goulson will be signing copies of his book which are available to purchase in advance from the Trust's website (limited stocks also available to buy on the night). £10 per person (£8 for concessions).



Community Fundraising

Fantastic 1st Harpenden Brownies

A huge thank you and congratulations to the 1st Harpenden Brownies for organising a fantastic Fundraising Fair in support of the Trust. The Brownies organised the event themselves, running a number of exciting stalls from hook-a-duck to lucky dips – in total raising £260. A wonderful achievement by all involved, thank you.

Bertie's day at Apsley Mills Sainsbury's

A huge thank you to our friends at Apsley Mills Sainsbury's for inviting Bertie the Badger along for a busy day of bucket collecting. With the help of our volunteers and the generosity of everyone who donated on the day, we managed to raise more than £170 – thank you!

Challenge Yourself

If you're looking for a way to challenge yourself this year, why not join us on one of our challenge events from our fun-filled inflatable 5km-run to the scenic London to Paris bike ride. Our events are a great way to get fit, have fun and raise vital funds for your local wildlife.



Find out more on hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/challengeevents

Become a fantastic fundraiser!

Could you spare an hour or two a month to be a volunteer fundraiser? We urgently need help with:

- Helping place collecting tins in your local pubs and shops
- Helping us with bucket collections at local supermarkets and train stations



- Fundraising with your friends or neighbours



Find out more from our fundraising team on Fundraising@hmwt.org or on 01727 858901.



Join our Chairman, Mike Master, for our new Corporate Golf Day at The Grove Hotel on 21st October 2019

Play at one of the best courses in the country while enjoying a fantastic day with colleagues, clients or friends and help raise vital funds to protect local wildlife. The Trust has been working in partnership with The Grove since July 2016 to enhance the conservation management of their grounds, so we are proud to

hold our event here. This will be a full day out including a two-course dinner and a charity auction.



Please contact our fundraising team on Fundraising@hmwt.org or 01727 858 901 for further information or to enter a team.

Working for Wildlife - UK Power Networks

Fifteen staff from UKPN worked hard at Balls Wood to clear scrub and create scallops to maintain the diverse landscape of woodland, rides and glades to encourage wildlife to flourish.

Balls Wood is a great habitat for butterflies and one of the best sites in Hertfordshire for woodland butterflies, like the white admiral.

We are grateful to the team at UKPN for their annual support.

Our working for wildlife days offer companies the chance to get staff outdoors to enjoy their local wild spaces, to learn new skills and work as a team with colleagues and to make a real difference to local wildlife.



Find out how you can get involved and get in touch with our fundraising team on Fundraising@hmwt.org or 01727 858 901.



Engaging the community

Thanks to a generous donation of £2,680 from our corporate partner Affinity Water's Community Engagement Programme, we were able to do vital habitat work at Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve, ensuring that it continues to be a fantastic place for the local community to get closer to wildlife.

In Remembrance

We would like to thank **Joan Williams** for kindly leaving a gift in her will to the Trust. Joan was a valued member of the Trust for over 30 years and we are extremely grateful to Joan for continuing to support the Trust in this special way.

We would also like to thank the friends and family of long-standing members **Chris Bartram** and **David Valentine**, for kindly donating to the Trust in their memory. These donations make a lasting contribution to our local conservation work and help ensure that the wildlife their loved ones cherished is protected for years to come. Our thanks and sincerest condolences to their friends and family.



Wildlife Travel

A special thank you to our partners at Wildlife Travel for donating £800 to the Trust. Wildlife Travel offer fantastic holidays that allow you to experience wildlife up close, both in the UK and across the globe. Lead by conservationists, nature conservation is at the core of their business, with every holiday booked generating a donation for the Trust.



Discover your next holiday at www.wildlife-travel.co.uk





Orange-tip butterfly

Anthocharis cardamines

A sure sign of spring arriving is the dancing flight of an orange-tip butterfly! They are one of the first ones on the wing, flying between April and July.

The distinctive bold orange on its forewings, which makes the orange-tip easy to identify, is reserved for the male while the female is a more monochrome version with grey-black wingtips.



The orange-tip is common and can be spotted fluttering along woodland rides, hedgerows, river banks and gardens.

PAUL THURISH

Orange tip at Aldbury Nowers



Fen Appeal Update

TERRY WHITTAKER 2020/VISION

Water Vole

Thanks to you, we have raised an incredible **£32,000** to help protect Hertfordshire's last remaining fens.

We are overwhelmed by the support we received for our latest appeal, to restore and manage Hertfordshire's precious fens. Your generous support has enabled our Reserves Team and volunteers to carry out the crucial conservation work needed over the winter months to maintain this rare and vulnerable habitat and the wildlife that depends on it. This essential work such as scrub clearance, reed cutting and conservation grazing was only made possible because of you.

We cannot thank you enough for your support. Here's just a few of the ways your donation is helping to protect one of Hertfordshire's rarest habitats...

Thanks to you, we have been able to restore all of the ditches across Rye Meads and Thorley Wash Nature Reserve, creating homes for water voles. Ditches are a vital habitat for our



Redpoll

endangered water voles, which rely on ditches and ponds to dig their burrows. Clearing them prevents vegetation from overgrowing and drying out these important waterways so water voles and other wildlife can thrive.

Thanks to you, we have been able to better control the water levels at Rye Meads Nature Reserve, to create suitable feeding and breeding sites for snipe. Rye Meads is often waterlogged, which creates unsuitable habitats for rare wildfowl such as snipe. By encouraging drainage through willow pollarding and keeping the ditches clear we hope to create the perfect sites for snipe to feed and hopefully breed in Hertfordshire once again.

Thanks to you, we have been able to repair and replace fencing across Thorley Wash and Rye Mead Nature Reserves so we can graze cattle.



Snipe

NOEL GILL 2020/VISION

Conservation grazing is a vital tool in preventing scrub encroachment and enabling rare plants that depend on our fens like meadow rue to thrive. Through selective grazing and trampling of scrub, our cattle help to maintain our fens as wildlife-rich habitats.

Special thanks

to Russell Savory and Birds Eye Studios for creating and donating free of charge the beautiful video footage used to help raise awareness of our appeal.



Thorley Wash

Thanks to the Trust's conservation efforts, Thorley Wash, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Stort Valley, is a thriving haven for endangered wildlife.

The morning sun's bright rays begin to clear the mist from the meadow, a sedge warbler is singing and a kestrel lazily drifts overhead – Thorley Wash is waking up and it is a sight not to be missed.

Formerly known as Thorley Flood Pound, Thorley Wash is a beautiful wetland reserve nestled between the River Stort navigation and the Stort backwater, the original route of the river, south of Bishop's Stortford near

the village of Spellbrook. The site was designated as an SSSI in 1986, supporting a rich variety of wildflowers such as ragged-robin, marsh marigold, fen bedstraw, cuckoo flower and marsh orchids.

Fen habitats like this were once common across Britain but have been in decline for many years as a result of water abstraction, pollution and pressures from development, leading to 99% of fens being lost in the UK. Thorley Wash had not been actively managed before the Trust took control of the site in 2010 and it was in poor condition. Trees – particularly the dominant willow – were overgrown, blocking out light for other vegetation, and ditches were clogged. As a result, Natural England designated the SSSI as 'unfavourable'.

Thanks to funding from EU Leader and Growth Area Funding (GAF), a significant and much-needed restoration project saw the removal of willow scrub, desilting and unclogging of ditches, and the introduction of careful cattle

grazing, leading to Natural England declaring Thorley Wash to be back in 'favourable' condition in 2016. Thanks to a successful reintroduction programme in 2015, the highly endangered water vole flourishes here too. Being a real rarity in Hertfordshire, this complex fen habitat needs careful and continuous management through conservation grazing, reed cutting and ditch and scrub clearance.

At this time of year, you will find this reserve alive with birdsong. Thorley Wash is now a paradise for birdwatchers with a large variety of birds such as whitethroat, blackcap and wren thriving in the scrubby margins. Snipe visit during the winter months and flocks of goldfinch, siskin and redpoll can be seen feeding on alder. Annual bird surveys have found grasshopper warbler breeding and seen the arrival of the Cetti's warbler to the Stort Valley.

Bring your binoculars and follow the Sculpture Trail to explore this reserve

and enjoy panoramic views of the valley. Wander around at dusk and you might see a barn owl sweeping over the landscape in search of prey or listen out for the distinctive cuckoo's call during the day. If you're lucky, you might even spot the elusive water vole emerging from its underground burrow or hear its distinctive 'plop' as it enters the water. Spring and early summer are a great time to discover

the golden yellow of marsh marigold, amethyst spikes of purple loosestrife and the bright pinks of ragged-robin. If you look closely at the white flower head of meadowsweet, you will see many types of insects attracted by its sweet scent. In early summer, you will find dragonflies and damselflies, such as the banded demoiselle and broad-bodied chaser, dart past you in search of food and a mate.

Get to know this wonderful wetland at one of our events this spring:

Springtime at Thorley
Saturday 13 April
Learn about the residents and seasonal visitors of this reserve and see if you can spot them too!

Discover the Dawn Chorus
Sunday 5 May
If you don't mind getting up early, you can discover the magic of the dawn chorus, as the sun bathes the landscape in golden light.

Mid-summer stroll at Thorley
Saturday 22 June
Listen to birdsong and watch out for water voles while exploring this reserve.

Book your space on [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events)



Southern marsh orchid

©TERRY WHITTAKER/ZOOVISION

JOSH KUBALE

Reserves Roundup

Thanks to the generosity of our members, vital grant funding and to our wonderful team of volunteers, it has been a busy winter in our reserves.

At **Hertford Heath**, we have felled several trees to keep the heathland from being overshadowed. Many silver birch and oak saplings were removed

and large scrapes were created to expose the acidic soils needed for gorse and heather.

Our living lawnmowers – old English goats – have moved into **Amwell** to clear the area near the Dragonfly Trail from shrubs. After a short break in spring, the goats will be grazing at Amwell again in summer.

Comprehensive pond works at **Patmore Heath** have removed

dominant reed mace to maintain an open habitat for dragonflies and many other species.

Volunteers have coppiced hornbeam stalls and elm at **Stocking Springs Wood**. Deer baskets – a protective barrier around coppice stalls – and dead hedges have been constructed to reduce deer grazing pressure and to encourage ground level flora like wild daffodils and bluebells.

Nature's Calendar

March-June 2019

Tim Hill, the Trust's Conservation Manager, highlights some of his favourite seasonal wildlife and makes suggestions for things to look out for and do through the months ahead.



DANNY GREEN

Black-headed gull



SURREY PHOTOGRAPHY
Mayfly

March

Winter, meet summer

March is something of a turning point in the natural world with the natural equivalent of our rush hour beginning. A mixture of longer days and hormonal changes means that birds start to think about breeding and that usually means them moving from their wintering places to one suitable for bringing up a family.

Over the past winter, we have been lucky enough to host a few small parties of waxwings, most notably a group of 12 which spent many weeks feeding on the fruits of sorbus trees in the centre of Hertford. These pink-plumed beauties drew crowds of admirers and many thousands of camera shutters were clicked in their direction. Towards the end of their stay, many thousands of miles away in Africa, sand martins will begin a long journey north to end up back with us where they will breed in the banks of rivers or former gravel pits. A few years ago, in the latter part of March when I was doing my monthly count of the ducks at Panshanger Park, I was delighted to hear a gentle twittering above me – sand martins, swooping lightly back and forth and feasting on the first of the spring insects. As I followed their movement, I was distracted by a disturbance in large bunches of mistletoe which festoon many of the trees at Panshanger. After lining up my telescope, I was astonished to see a small group of waxwings feeding on the remaining fruits, no doubt fattening up before leaving for their own breeding places in the forests of northern Europe.



Waxwing
DAVE MILBAY

April

Mrs Tiggy-Winkle in trouble

As spring unfolds so do hedgehogs, becoming fully active after their winter hibernation. If we endured a late winter, they will be hungry and desperate to find food.

With recent research showing that the gardens in villages and towns are becoming increasingly important habitat, we all have the opportunity to help Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, the name given by Beatrix Potter to one of her favourite animals.

 This month, join me for a spot of night-time garden watching. If we are lucky enough to spot a hedgehog in the garden, it's all too easy to think it as 'ours' when in reality, these animals are natural explorers and may travel 1-2km in a night. Accordingly, we share hedgehogs with many neighbours. To facilitate their natural behaviour, one of the best things we can do is to make sure there are gaps in fences such that we create a connected gardenscape through which these animals can move. Next on the list should be to provide feeding and cover by leaving some of the garden overgrown where invertebrates can thrive. Providing drinking water is important too.


May

Carpe diem

If your life was just one day long, how would you spend it? Fortunately, we have on average 29,200 days to fulfil our lives. *Ephemera danica*, the mayfly, on the other hand, has just one as an adult - it quite literally has to 'seize the day'.

There are 51 species of 'mayflies' in Britain, but it is *E. danica* which usually appears in this month, coinciding with the may or hawthorn being in full flower, after which the family derives its name. Our chalk rivers provide an important habitat for these insects and it is worth setting aside time for a few bankside walks in the hope of hitting upon a day of emergence. The flies have evolved such that they emerge en masse, thereby reducing slightly the risk of predation. If you visit the river on the right day, you will experience one of nature's wonders - thousands upon thousands of insects taking to the air and dancing over the river in a mesmerising ballet. Following a quick moult to shed their dull larval skin, breeding is the only thing that matters to them. Eggs laid into the river will hatch and the larvae will spend two years before they too will run the gauntlet of emergence to begin the cycle of life once more.

The mayflies also help us monitor the health of our rivers. They form one of eight groups of aquatic invertebrates which are surveyed once a month by a team of trained volunteers who carry out 'Riverfly' monitoring along our rivers.


 If you would like to get involved, please contact Sarah Perry, our Living River Officer, on Sarah.Perry@hmwt.org or 01727 858 901.

June

The glory of gulls

The black-headed gull is our most common gull in Hertfordshire and Middlesex, with wintering numbers exceeding over 20,000 birds, roosting at the Trust's reserves such as Tring Reservoirs and Hilfield Park Reservoir.

Once only winter visitors, the gulls are now breeding here. As recently as 2008, only one pair nested and raised a chick at Rye Meads. Shortly after, the birds have occupied almost every reserve in the county where rafts were provided for terns. In 2018, the Trust's Amwell Nature Reserve had over 90 breeding pairs! Not only are the gulls using the rafts, but they have also started nesting on the islands.

 Gull colonies are not for the faint-hearted – approaching Amwell in June, you will be confronted with a wall of sound – a cacophony of screeching, crying and cawing. It's a spectacle worth experiencing and if you do, take time to watch the birds really closely. The colony is a rival for any television soap opera with conversation, squabbles, sex, births and deaths in equal measure – watch one episode and you might just get hooked.



Black-headed gull
TIM HILL



An extraordinary fondness for beetles

Trevor James is the author of *Beetles of Hertfordshire*, management committee member of Hertfordshire Natural History Society and a Coleopterophile – beetle lover. He tells us why he fell for Hertfordshire’s beetles and why it’s well worth taking a closer look at them.

The cover of the latest edition of Hertfordshire Natural History Society’s *Beetles of Hertfordshire* features a superb photo of a longhorn beetle (*Agapanthia villosoviridescens*). It does have a recently made-up English name which is so boring I won’t bother you with it. This is a beautiful beetle, with mottled golden wing-cases and long, powder-blue and black striped antennae. At around 2-3cm, it is quite big and you might well come across it on a hogweed flower during mid-summer.

It wasn’t always like this. Some 30 years ago, the only place it had ever been seen in Hertfordshire was at Oughtonhead Common – adjacent to the Trust’s Oughtonhead Nature Reserve – near Hitchin. The site is an outlier of historic fen, and in East Anglia the longhorn beetle was very much a fen beast, found in the stems of wild angelica. So, what changed? Around 1990, the beetle began to be found in hogweed stems which became a perfect substitute for angelica. There is some suggestion that hogweed somehow changed its chemical characteristic because other insects began to avoid it. It suited *Agapanthia*



Black-and-Yellow Longhorn Beetle

though, so the beetle has since spread and become a frequent sight to many observant naturalists. This kind of insight is what has always driven me to study wildlife. It demonstrates neatly that living things are infinitely adaptable and that we can never know everything about them. At the same time, we would not have known about that subtle shift if people had not taken the trouble to make observations about species over the years. Comparing the present with the past gives us a great insight into the way the natural world works. Done systematically, the results can be very rewarding indeed, and it is a task that is never completed!

Beetles as a group are incredibly diverse, ranging in size in the UK from 0.5 mm long to 9 cm or more. They can also be found pretty well anywhere – from under the ground to the tops of trees, from sea-level to mountain tops, inside plants, in our homes, in rivers and bogs, in dung heaps and rotting fungi – you name it, there is likely to be a beetle there somewhere. As such, they are a fundamentally important part of the chain of life, along with numbers of other invertebrate groups.

The recent book presents details of all the 2,483 species that had been recorded in the county since recording began in the early 19th century, including distribution maps and photos, allowing beginners to get to grips with a large array of species. I was helped by a wide range of people putting this together, especially by the late Dave Hodges of Watford who took many photos of specimens specifically for the book but, sadly, passed away before it came out.

People can start to study beetles easily enough. You only need to take a look at your local patch and you are bound to find some. Gardens can be good, especially if they are flowery with some old trees nearby. Ladybirds will be an obvious first attraction, with around 40 different species or so in the UK.



Rose Chafer



Agapanthia villosoviridescens

I have mentioned one longhorn beetle with a good back story, but there are plenty of others, such as the black and yellow spotted longhorn (*Rutpela maculata*) which turns up on bramble flowers during late summer. If you live around Hertford or Hoddesdon, watch out for the rose chafer (*Cetonia aurata*) – a beautiful metallic green, chunky beetle that is found on flowers. Around Cheshunt, you are likely to see Britain’s largest beetle, the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) wandering around on a pavement. Elsewhere, we are more likely to find its slightly smaller cousin the lesser stag beetle (*Dorcus paralepipedus*) with shorter ‘horns’ that can be found on the edge of roads or in rotten ash trees.



Trust reserves are often important places to find beetles. Apart from Oughtonhead, one very important site is Danemead Nature Reserve near Hoddesdon. Part of the Broxbourne Woods ancient woodland complex, Danemead is an open patch of ancient, heathy wood-pasture with willow scrub, old oaks and hornbeams, and rich in scarce species. King’s Meads, near Ware, is a focal point of wetlands in the Lea catchment, and as such is particularly important for wetland species. In the south near Potters Bar, Fir and Pond Woods Nature Reserve is another species-rich site. As a remnant of the historic Enfield Chase, it has an unbroken historic continuity with the medieval Forest of Middlesex.



Wherever you might be – with modern cameras, you can always try and take a photo to get a proper identification. Beetles can be tricky, though, so don’t get discouraged if you find that yours is one of several look-alikes that need a bit of specialist study for firm identification. Just keep at it – they are a fascinating group and well worth the effort.

Trevor James’ book *Beetles of Hertfordshire* is available in most book shops and online at www.hnhs.org.



The Nature of... a Hedgerow

Hedgerows are one of our most easily recognised wildlife habitats found lining roads, railways and footpaths, bordering fields and gardens. Historically used as a protective barrier for crops and livestock, hedgerows are much more than merely a fence. They can be a valuable haven for wildlife.

Hedge stems from the Saxon word "hege" and means "living boundary". Its origins date back some 5,000 years. If managed properly, hedgerows provide roosting places and food sources for yellowhammer, blackcap and many other farmland and garden birds. Honeysuckle,

hawthorn, bramble and ivy attract many species of hoverfly, bees and bush crickets. Hedges form important connections between habitats with foxes, badgers and other small mammals using hedgerows as highways to move between them to avoid crossing open fields.

Hedgerows also serve as navigation aids for bats and bumblebees. In the shrubby vegetation at the foot of hedges, you can find ground beetles, warbler nests, shield bugs and, of course, our favourite little mammal which was even named after this habitat, the hedgehog. In a 100-metre stretch of hedgerow, you can find up to 3,000 species of animals, plants, lichens and fungi.

Hedgerows are not only havens for wildlife, they also serve as windbreaks for fields and roads. In the 20th century, the large-scale removal of hedgerows to increase agricultural efficiency has led to the loss of soils from larger open fields through wind and water erosion.

Planting more hedgerows and improving the management of existing hedgerows is a conservation priority. With careful management, hedgerows can be very valuable for wildlife, for instance delaying cutting until late winter to allow birds the chance to feed on the fruits, and creating flower rich field margins which provide feeding, overwintering and breeding sites for insects.



Get outside and discover what's hiding in your hedge!

Your photos...



Share your wild wanderers!



Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust



@HMWTbadger



Hertswildlifetrust



These mallards taking off at Amwell Nature Reserve were caught on camera by **Kevin Hanrahan**

@Kevin.Biker

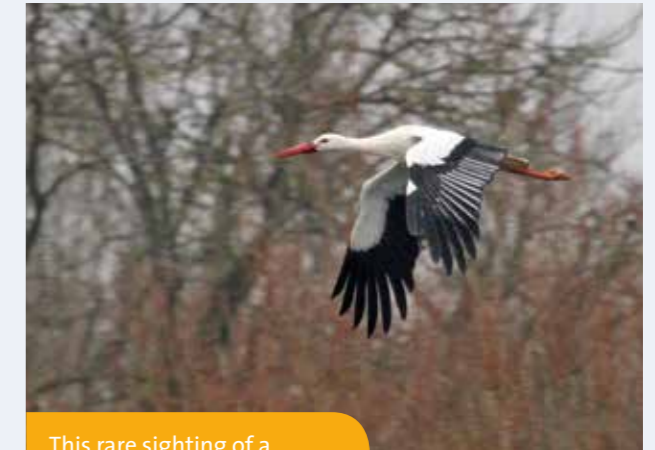


Nicola Taggart sent us this rather demanding-looking little robin.



Ian Wood snapped these lovely snowdrops at Rickmansworth Aquadrome.

@iaw1965



This rare sighting of a white stork at Stockers Lake was captured by **Paul Lewis**



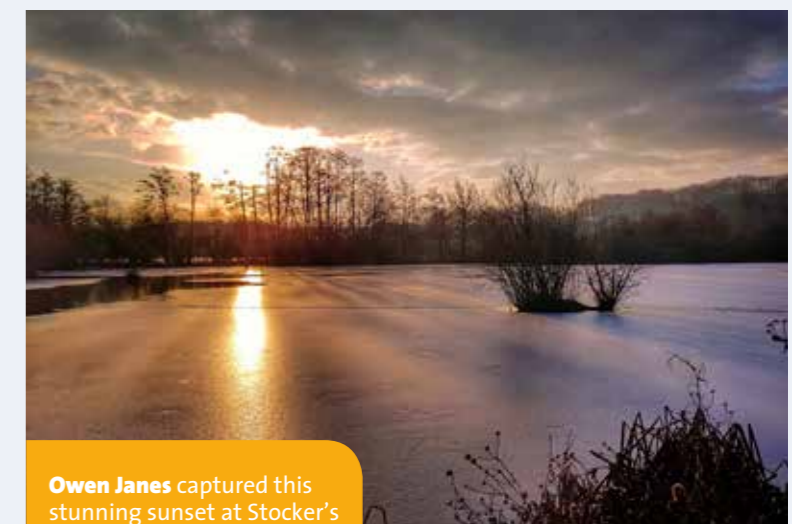
Michael Nott got a great shot of the Berkhamsted waxwings.

@mvnott



Chantal Geall enjoyed a frosty winter walk at Waterford Heath Nature Reserve.

@ChantalGeall



Owen Janes captured this stunning sunset at Stocker's Lake Nature Reserve.

FESTIVAL of WILDLIFE



Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 July
10:00am-4:00pm

Panshanger Park

Join us for a FREE family festival at the beautiful Panshanger Park for a weekend of walks, talks and conservation activities to celebrate the wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

Find out more at:

hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/festival

In partnership with

