

Celebrating the wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex

wildlifematters

Summer 2024



**Herts &
Middlesex**
Wildlife Trust

**What's
Inside?**

The Trust at 60

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60 YEARS
WILD
1964 - 2024

Welcome



From Peregrine Falcons flying high at St Albans Cathedral to Water Buffalo wallowing at Thorley Wash and to Bitterns booming at Amwell, there's been a lot going on to capture the imagination, and I hope, inspire people to take an interest in their local wildlife. To find out more you can read some of the highlights in our review of 2023/24 on page 22.

In the run up to the General Election, we've called on prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) to commit to nature's recovery. I've written to PPCs to ask for their personal commitment to meet with me if elected. I've made the point there is no time to prevaricate - action is needed now, and they need to show leadership. As one of our members and supporters, you are already making a difference, helping us to stand up for wildlife and carry out our advocacy work. We will be joining with Wildlife Trusts up and down the country calling for urgent measures by the new government to tackle the nature and climate crises, and your support will be invaluable.

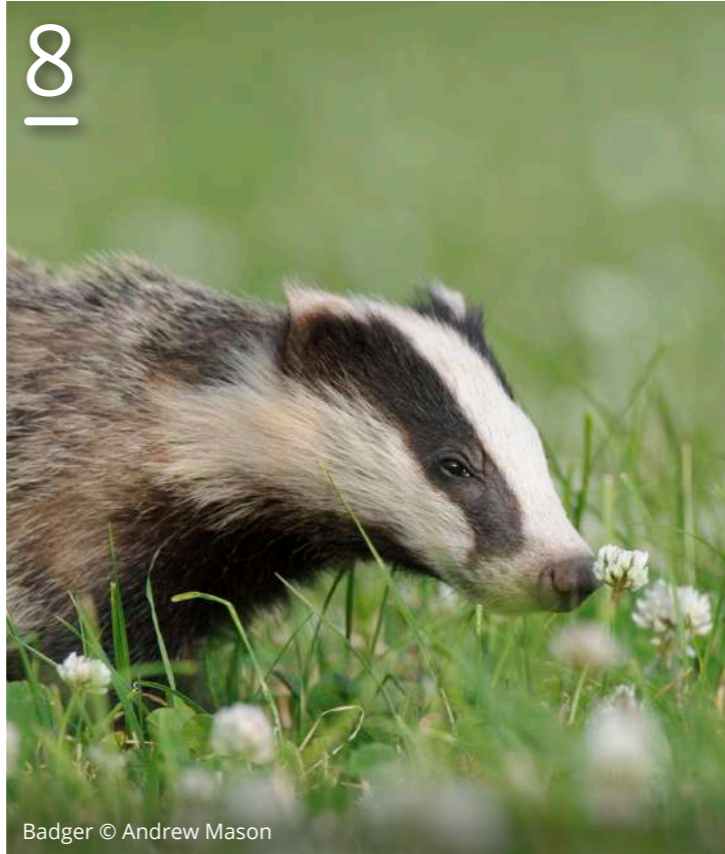
We are looking back in this edition of Wildlife Matters to celebrate the Trust's 60th anniversary and you can read about our impact over the years, as well as how you can help us to continue that in years to come, on page 8. I hope you'll also enjoy reading about some of the new areas of work that'll be keeping the team busy over the coming months.

It is such a wonderful time of year to see wildlife, whether that's bumblebees in your garden or orchids at one of our reserves - please do share photos of what you spot on our social media accounts by tagging the Trust @hertswildlifetrust on Instagram and Facebook and @HMWTBadger on Twitter/X, or by emailing them to media@hmwt.org

Thank you so much for your support.

Lesley

Lesley Davies
Chief Executive



Badger © Andrew Mason



Fragrant-orchid at Hexton Chalk Pit © Ian Carle



Dormouse © Danny Green/2020VISION

Play our weekly lottery  

Support Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and win up to £25,000

The prize draw takes place every Friday and each entry is £1. For every entry, at least 50p comes back to the Trust to support our work caring for wildlife across our two counties.

For information on how to play and the full terms and conditions please visit hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/lottery

1ST PRIZE £25,000 Match 6 numbers

2ND PRIZE £1,000 Match 5 numbers

3RD PRIZE £25 Match 4 numbers

GambleAware  

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Did you know we have a members' webpage?

Visit hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/mymembership to find frequently asked questions and how to manage your membership. You can also discover more about our local conservation projects and campaigns, as well as upcoming events so that you can explore your beautiful local wildlife.

Cover: Thank you to Lesley Fidell for her wonderful photograph of a Honey Bee, which won the Adult Camera category in our Wild Snaps Photography Competition last year.

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The latest wildlife news from Hertfordshire and Middlesex, plus coverage of UK-wide developments

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
Look at what we've got coming up

 More info online

 Join an event


 Discover wildlife

 Donate

 Do

 Take Action

 Enjoy free of charge

 Make your voice heard #DefendNature

All details correct at time of printing.

Herts and Middlesex Wild News



Broadwater Lake © Tim Hill

Threat to Broadwater Lake - You Can Still Take Action

In previous issues, we've shared our campaign to save Broadwater Lake SSSI, a nationally protected wetland in the Colne Valley, from the proposed development of a new Watersports Facility and Activity Centre by Hillingdon Council on the site. The planning application was expected to be considered by the Planning Committee on 14 March 2024 but has been delayed.

We've recently been informed that an amended submission is currently being prepared which strongly suggests that despite having received over 1200 objections from you, our members, local residents, conservation groups and the Government's own environmental advisors, Natural England

and the Environment Agency – Hillingdon Council is still trying to make this scheme fit at Broadwater Lake SSSI.



Please continue to use your voice to fight this development which would be catastrophic for wildlife. You can still object to the planning application and keep up to date with the latest news on our campaign at ow.ly/lfs650S9Lew



Celebrating a True Champion

Congratulations to Derrick Guy, an outstanding volunteer, who has recently been recognised as a 'River Champion' by the River Restoration Centre (RRC) at a national awards ceremony for his voluntary work on the River Rib in Hertfordshire.

This accolade celebrates the outstanding efforts of individuals contributing to river restoration in their area and recognises the dedication of those improving rivers for wildlife and people. Derrick was one of six 'River Champions' from across Great Britain to receive the title. He was nominated by Sarah Perry, the Trust's River Catchment Coordinator, who has seen the impact that Derrick has made over a number of years. Sarah says "Derrick is a full time, passionate River Champion and makes a difference to the River Rib chalk stream every day".

Read more about Derrick's contribution to the River Rib and the local community at ow.ly/7xHb50S9NaX



Derrick Guy (front) adding more native plants to the River Rib at Buntingford with volunteers © Sarah Perry



Mammal Hide at Tewin Orchard & Hopkyns Wood

The Trust and Herts and Middlesex Badger Group (HMBG) have been working collaboratively for many years to deliver activities at the Mammal Hide at our nature reserve at Tewin Orchard & Hopkyns Wood.

We are delighted to have embarked on a new era in partnership working with HMBG who are now leading all the activities at the Mammal Hide. Find out more by emailing HMBG tewinhide@gmail.com or calling their dedicated phone line regarding the activities at the Mammal Hide on **07596 903520**.

All other enquiries regarding the nature reserve should still be directed to the Trust.



Standing up for Chalk Rivers on Channel 4

Chloë Edwards, the Trust's Director of Nature Recovery was recently interviewed by Channel 4 News highlighting the challenges our chalk rivers face. The piece was filmed to coincide with the UK River Summit & Festival. You can view the footage here ow.ly/jeHi50S9Ni6.

Find out more about the challenges facing our chalk rivers and why they need stronger protection on page 18.



Norfolk Bladder-moss © Astrid Biddle

Record-breaking Norfolk Bladder-moss Population

At least 4,300,000 Norfolk Bladder-moss sporophytes have been recorded at Wilstone Reservoir, making it a principal site for UK and European conservation of this red-listed species. To place that in context, the area occupied by the population is 72 times the area of the largest previously recorded UK population!

Congratulations to former Trust Ecologist, Astrid Biddle, on the publication of her paper in the peer-reviewed Journal of Bryology which documents the drought-induced emergence of Norfolk Bladder-moss (*Physcomitrium eurystomum*) on the drawdown zone of Wilstone Reservoir – one of four reservoirs that form Tring Reservoirs Nature Reserve.

Image above shows Norfolk Bladder-moss emerging from the cracks in the mud with their beautiful brown spore capsules.



River Lea © David Johnson

Hertfordshire's Chalk Rivers to be Boosted by Species Survival Fund

The Trust was delighted that a major project to improve our local chalk rivers was announced as one of 20 successful nationwide projects that will receive funding through the £25 million Species Survival Fund, a partnership between Defra and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It was launched to help halt and reverse the decline in species abundance, by preserving vital habitats.

The Trust's award of £1.7 million will restore chalk river habitats across 11.15km of the River Lea Catchment. Watch this space for news of the project getting underway!



To get the latest news and events from across our area, sign up to our monthly E-newsletter!

UK NEWS



Pyramidal Orchid on a brownfield site being cleared for development

Biodiversity Net Gain falls short

A new era beckons as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – a requirement on developers to ensure wildlife habitat is left in a better state than it was before the building project began – has become mandatory for all major and minor developments in England. The Wildlife Trusts have actively contributed to the evolution of this legislation for many years, recognising that development is often necessary, but does not have to be achieved in a way that harms nature.

This legislation has the potential to transform our planning systems whereby developers deliver more for nature – contributing to its recovery – rather than accelerating its decline. This is vital if we are to meet our international obligations to restore 30 per cent of land and sea for nature by 2030.

Biodiversity Net Gain could not only make a positive contribution towards nature's recovery but also help address the climate emergency in the process. However, The Wildlife Trusts are concerned that Biodiversity Net Gain is not currently on track to address the severity of the continuing nature crisis. We believe that UK Government needs to set more ambitious targets.

Rachel Hackett, planning and development manager at The Wildlife Trusts, said: "It's extremely disappointing to see that some of the rules and guidelines for Biodiversity Net Gain fall short of their intended ambition. Given the uncertainties surrounding habitat creation, a gain of 10% will at best hold the tide against nature loss to development and provide a contingency to ensure no overall loss of biodiversity. But if we want to secure real recovery for nature, we need to see at least 20% gain."

We will continue to call for regulations and guidance to be more effective and strive for a gold standard for Biodiversity Net Gain. After all, there is a nature crisis in the UK – one in six species are at risk of extinction and the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. We propose developers and local authorities go beyond the minimum requirements and aim for at least a 20% gain for nature.

We'd like to see the UK Government changing policy and guidance so the sale of excess biodiversity units is prevented. We'd like no further broadening of permitted development rules and the Government to provide policy guidance to ensure Biodiversity

Net Gain for permitted development is made a matter for local consideration rather than a blanket exemption.

Local Planning Authorities also need to be resourced with the right level of skills and capacity across departments to oversee the Biodiversity Net Gain process to ensure it is properly implemented, monitored and enforced. Finally, Biodiversity Net Gain must be 'additional' to existing mechanisms for nature conservation and enhancement.

When it comes to protecting, restoring and managing the natural environment, The Wildlife Trusts up and down the country have unmatched experience, knowledge and expertise. Nature conservation is our primary charitable objective. So, for decades we have delivered high-quality Biodiversity Net Gain habitat and offered specialist advice and consultancy to developers, local planning authorities, partners and communities. All our funding is invested with the purpose of delivering gains for nature.

UK UPDATE

The Great Big Nature Survey

Last year The Wildlife Trusts launched The Great Big Nature Survey, calling on the UK public to share their views on some of the most important issues affecting people and wildlife. We asked questions like: How often do you get out into nature? Should people try to control nature to better protect it? How important are green spaces to you? And what roles should people, business and government have in looking after nature?

The Great Big Nature Survey helps to identify what people in the UK and islands really think about wildlife and how we, as a society, should protect it. The results also support The Wildlife Trusts when holding the UK Government to account over its environmental policies and priorities, in this election year and beyond.

Whatever your views on nature, however important (or not) it is to you,



join more than 21,000 people that have already taken part and make your voice heard by taking The Great Big Nature survey today. If you've taken the survey before, thank you! Do please take it again, so that we can track how people's views on these important issues have changed over time.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more at wildlifetrusts.org/great-big-nature-survey

Making Friends With Molluscs

The Wildlife Trusts have joined forces with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) to publish a new *Wild About Gardens* guide, 'Making Friends with Molluscs'. The guide reveals the fascinating world of slugs and snails and challenges common myths about these creatures. For example, did you know that the majority of the 150 slug and snail species in the UK can

actually positively contribute to your garden ecosystem?

One of their most significant roles is as nature's clean-up crew; molluscs feed on rotting plants, fungi, dung and even carrion, helping to recycle nitrogen and other nutrients and minerals back into the soil. They can also clean algae off the glass of greenhouses, leaving behind their trademark trails.

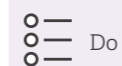
Many of our much-loved garden visitors, including frogs, Song Thrushes, and ground beetles, rely on slugs and snails as a key food source. By supporting these molluscs, gardeners indirectly support a diverse array of wildlife too.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more at wildaboutgardens.org.uk



Tell us what you think!

We'd love to get your feedback on your membership magazine. Can you help us by taking part in a short survey to share your views?

You'll find it at wildlifetrusts.org/magazine-survey

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



1 Strawberry Hill Forever

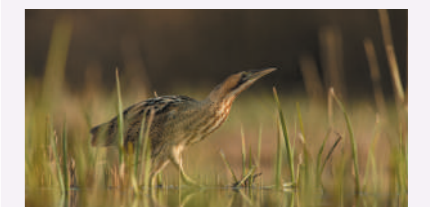
The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants is a step closer to securing ownership of the uniquely special Strawberry Hill, thanks to generous funding from Biffa Award. Securing the future of a Bedfordshire farm that has been left to rewild for 25 years represents one of the most exciting land transactions in the Wildlife Trust's history.

wtru.st/BCN-Strawberry-Hill

2 Booming Success

Prompted by the near-extinction of a member of the heron family, a long-term conservation project by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and conservation partners has doubled the area of Bittern-suitable reedbed habitat. With a breakthrough this year, the first male Bittern in recent history was recorded 'booming', making its mating call on Amwell Nature Reserve.

wtru.st/Herts-bittern



3 Sula Rules The Waves

Alderney Wildlife Trust has recorded its seabird life in more detail than any other island, all thanks to Sula, the wildlife survey boat. Now, Sula needs sponsorship to support her important role in advancing conservation. Her next voyage is to help monitor the island's Grey Seals, protect Guillemot colonies and map Alderney's tidal flow and marine habitats.

wtru.st/Sula-Sponsorship

Take a Journey Through Time

60 Years of Making a Difference



Over 60 years the Trust has come a very long way, and there's nothing like a timeline to illustrate our journey! Thank you to Chloé Valerie Harmsworth, for compiling this wonderful record which illustrates the impact we have had – our important milestones and campaigns, nature reserves acquired, and membership numbers. We hope you enjoy looking back in time and noting our progress just as much as we have. Thank you to each and every one of you, our members, for being part of our story and enabling us to achieve so much for wildlife.

We now find ourselves at a pivotal point in the nature crisis, also facing increasing costs due to economic pressures. Our commitment to overcome these challenges and reverse nature's decline is as strong as ever.

Badger © Andrew Mason



1964

21 August, 'Hertfordshire & Middlesex Trust for Nature Conservation' officially registered. Nature reserves included Ashwell Springs and Tring Reservoirs. Hertford Heath protected from the building of playing fields, brick pits at Bricket Wood preserved, construction of Royston by-pass (impacting Therfield Heath) prevented, River Gade in Hemel Hempstead cleaned up, lobbied for the reduction in use of toxic chemicals including DDT (one of the first modern synthetic insecticides).



First newsletter

1965–1968

New nature reserves included Cassiobury Park Marsh, Hertford Heath, Aldbury Nowers, Hilfield Park Reservoir and Witney Pond. In 1965, prevented sports pitches being built on Patmore Heath, lobbied to make Badger digging and baiting illegal; in 1966, developed a management plan for Therfield Heath, surveyed Ruislip's flora and all our ponds; in 1967, the Trust's first employee appointed, a sub-committee was formed to operate a biological recording scheme. Membership = 601.



Lemsford Springs

1969 & 1970

In 1969, reserve working parties formally organised, work carried out to preserve wildlife sites in the Chess valley from the impact of new North Orbital Road, detailed report on the flora, fauna and geology of North-East Herts prepared for Roskill Commission into the siting of third London Airport; in 1970, Lemsford Springs purchased, and Sawbridgeworth Marsh in 50/50 ownership with Essex Wildlife Trust. Total of 20 reserves. Membership = 1,000.



Fir and Pond Woods © Charlotte Hussey

1971–1981

New reserves included Patmore Heath (1972), Hexton Chalk Pit (1974), Hertford Heath and Alpine Meadow (1973), Fir and Pond Woods (1975), Sarratt Bottom and Old Park Wood (1978), Purwell Springs (1980). In 1972, county biological data bank established at St Albans Museum; in 1974, 2,000 trees planted at Therfield Heath; in 1977, Dormice reported breeding in Balls Wood. Total of 39 reserves. Membership = 5,100.



Frogmore Meadows © Josh Kubale

1982–1987

In 1982, Trust office established at Grebe House in Verulamium Park, took on management of Stocker's Lake, Wildlife & Countryside Act came into force; in 1985, Frogmore Meadows purchased (45th reserve), Rye Meads and Tewin Orchard taken under management; in 1987, Trust name changed to Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

1988–1990

In 1988, Trust's newsletter renamed 'Wildlife Matters', funding received from British Telecom for 'Living Rivers' survey of Hertfordshire's rivers, streams and canals; in 1989, campaigned for the use of lead-free petrol; in 1990, mission statement 'Protecting Wildlife and Wild Places for Everyone' and Badger logo adopted, Badger Hide at Tewin Orchard opened by Kim Wilde and Steve Kourik.



Wildlife Matters



Otter © Elliot Smith

1991–1996

In 1991, Otters released at Amwell for reintroduction, Black-necked Grebe seen in Hertfordshire for first time in 60 years (Hilfield Reservoir); in 1993, Dormouse project launched with English Nature; in 1995, focused on heathland restoration, particularly at Hertford Heath and Patmore Heath, first report of Otters breeding at Rye Meads.



Bittern at Amwell ©

1997 & 1998

In 1997, received English Nature award for management of Therfield Heath, Wildlife Matters newsletter released 100th issue, worked on Bittern Action Plan for Lea Valley, completed county-wide habitat survey; in 1998, actively involved in national debate about Badger culling, developed a species action plan (with focus on Stag Beetles, Otters and Dormice).



Broadwater Lake © Tim Hill

1999–2007

In 1999, Broadwater Lake became a reserve; in 2001, Lottery grant awarded for the improvement of access to 12 key reserves; in 2003, membership = c.12,000 and Water Vole Conservation project initiated; in 2004, Water Buffalo introduced at Rye Meads; in 2006/7, Amwell purchased and opened.



Chalkhill Blue © Paul Thrush

2008–2010

In 2008, Living Landscapes projects started for Lee Valley Corridor, Colne Valley, Broxbourne Woods NNR, Hertford Rivers, Stort Valley and Chilterns at Tring; in 2009, Balls Wood, Gobions Wood and Hawkins Wood became new reserves, membership = 21,200; in 2010, return of Chalkhill Blue butterfly to Aldbury Nowers celebrated.



River Beane © Peter White

2011–2014

In 2011, grant received from Big Lottery Fund for Grebe House's wildlife garden, campaigned against viaduct being built across Broadwater Lake Nature Reserve (part of HS2); in 2012, Veolia funding secured to enhance Balls Wood; in 2013, Charter for Chalk Streams launched on River Beane, Coronation Meadows project at Therfield Heath, Records Centre (HERC) taken on from Herts County Council; in 2014, celebrated 50th anniversary with a 'Festival of Wildlife'.



Water Vole © Terry White

2015–2018

In 2015, won CPRE award for 'Riverfly Hub' monitoring, Water Voles reintroduced at Thorley Wash; in 2016, Dragonfly Trail enhanced at Panshanger Park, partnered with Jordans Farm to promote sustainable farming, partnered with Affinity Water to improve habitat and community engagement at Stocker's Lake, Hilfield Park and Springwell Reedbed, HERC reached two million records; in 2018, responded to Government's draft Environment Bill, rare Little Ringed Plovers sighted at Amwell.



Beane Marsh © Sarah Perry

2019 & 2020

In 2019, restored river habitat along River Lea in Wheathampstead, received funding from Environment Agency to improve fen meadows and wet woodland at Fir and Pond Woods, national 'Wilder Future' campaign launched; in 2020, acquired Beane Marsh, partnered with Home Farm Glamping, campaigned against HS2, and published the 2020 Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report setting priorities for habitat and species conservation.



Peregrine Falcon © Patrick Wainwright

2021 & 2022

In 2021, awarded nearly £200,000 from Government for Living Rivers project, Water Voles reintroduced to River Ver after 34-year absence, Wilder St Albans project launched; in 2022, Peregrine Falcons bred for the first time on St Albans Cathedral, Nextdoor Nature project launched to help connect local communities with nature, Harvest Mouse found at Thorley Wash for the first time, Water Voles released on River Beane after absence of over 20 years.



Astonbury Wood © Alice Bradley

2023 & 2024

Archers Green and Astonbury Wood Nature Reserves acquired, over 1,000 volunteers recorded, campaigning against the development of a Watersports Facility and Activity Centre at Broadwater Lake SSSI, Water Buffalo grazing at Thorley Wash, a Bittern is heard booming at Amwell, 300 Hazel trees planted at Balls Wood to increase habitat for Dormice, contributed to the national campaign for the General Election to ask people to 'vote for nature'. Membership = 23,697.



Nature is sounding the alarm

We have achieved so much in the last 60 years for local wildlife. But with continued environmental pressures and skyrocketing costs, our resources are stretched to the limit. That is why we have launched an urgent new appeal to raise £280,000 to invest in nature's future.

Find out more hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/crisis



Adult Nightingale singing © Chris Gomersall/2020VISION

**Your
Wild**
SUMMER

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 summer months ahead.



Tim Hill © Frieda Rummenhohl



Balls Wood © Frieda Rummenhohl (9)

Our Balls Wood Nature Reserve is a great place to go in search of Purple Emperors

Royalty in our Midst

This summer is a perfect time to go in search of Royalty. Not Charles, Camilla, William or Catherine, but our very own Emperor – the Purple Emperor, one of our largest, most spectacular but elusive butterflies. Until recent times this splendid insect was largely unknown in our counties but survey work by Butterfly Conservation has discovered it breeding in a number of woodlands where willow, the larval food plant are plentiful.

The Purple Emperor is a large brown butterfly and the male's upper wings shine an amazing iridescent blue or

deep purple in sunlight. In early July males joust for territory around tall Oak or Ash trees in the highest part of chosen woods. However, searching for displaying males is a hit and miss affair and for the most part leads to a stiff neck from all that peering heavenward. Fortunately for butterfly watchers, the male Emperor has a rather disdainful habit (to us) of feeding on animal droppings. They will also take salts from puddles and mud and any type of rotting flesh. Their descent to ground level usually takes place in the morning and, whilst feeding, the butterflies can be approached very closely.

In Hertfordshire, the Trust's Balls Wood Nature Reserve in early July is a good place to go in search of Purple Emperors. Get there on a warm day between 10am and 11am and pick a good vantage point overlooking a sunny glade and then just wait... If you're lucky you will be rewarded with views of one of our most beautiful butterflies. Just try to forget about what it's eating!

After feeding, males fly off to a high point in the wood where they will settle in the top of a tree looking out for a female to woo. If another male comes close, he will be chased off with some aggression and aerial

battles may ensue if rivals are equally matched.

Female Purple Emperors lack the colour of males and only when ready to mate will they approach the high spots in the wood where the males gather. After mating they go in search of willows, on which eggs are laid directly onto the upper side of leaves. After about 10 days the caterpillar emerges and feeds prior to hibernating in November. They start feeding again in spring before forming a chrysalis in June where the metamorphosis into the adult takes place.

The other top places to search for Purple Emperors are Heartwood Forest near Sandridge and Whippendell Woods near Watford.



© Tim Hill
Purple Emperor



Swifts © Jon Hawkins - Surrey Hills Photography



Chalkhill Blue © Paul Thrush

Rhapsody in Blue

July is the month when I become another year older. Fortunately for me, my birthday coincides with the peak flight-time for one of our most beautiful butterflies, the Chalkhill Blue.

Of the handful of places where it can be seen in our counties, my favourite of all is Hexton Chalk Pit Nature Reserve in the far north of Hertfordshire. As its name suggests, this is a place where chalk was quarried. The former industrial use has created an undulating landform, full of mounds and hollows, ups and downs – one of our best reserves for a satisfying game of hide and seek if you have children in your charge.

The diverse topography also creates a wonderful range of niches and

microclimates where chalkland plants such as Milkwort and Sainfoin thrive. The habitat here is carefully cared for by the Trust's reserves team, with the aid of sheep and more recently goats, whose hungry munching prevents vigorous grasses from swamping smaller plants. Another plant which thrives here is Horseshoe Vetch, which happens to be the foodplant for caterpillars of the Chalkhill Blue.

The first adults are on the wing from the end of the first week of July but the peak is usually during the third week. If you are going to visit, have a look at the weather forecast and aim for a warm sunny day around the 20th. Numbers always vary from year to year and are affected particularly

by climatic conditions. Following the washout summer in 2012, which you may remember was the year of the London Olympics, the populations of Chalkhill Blues exploded and at Hexton in 2013 there were many thousands seen on a few days – quite literally clouds of butterflies! For those lucky enough to witness the event, it will no doubt be remembered as one of the greatest wildlife spectacles in Hertfordshire.



Hexton Chalk Pit © Paul Thrush

Whilst at Hexton Chalk Pit Nature Reserve...

See this:

Watch the shivers and shakes of the seed heads of Quaking Grass as it tremors in the warm summer breeze.

Smell this:

Enjoy the aromatic scent of Wild Thyme which forms low-growing mats across the pits.

Hear this:

Listen out for the jolly whistling of Red Kites as they drift across the undulating landscape.

Feel this:

Crumble a small piece of chalk in your fingers remembering that it's formed from the remains of tiny organisms that lived and died in clear warm seas that covered this area 70–100 million years ago.



Red Kite © Tim Hill

Enjoy free of charge

Harebells © Tim Hill

Suggestions to experience and enjoy summer

Keep it local

Continue a local walk, saunter it weekly, seeing how the land changes through the long warm days of summer. Find a meadow and record how the flowers change through the weeks. By late summer, one of my favourites, Harebells, will be coming into flower, continuing through into early autumn.



Greenshank © Tim Hill

Lie down, look up!

With the ground warm and the grass dry, embrace the urge to rest and take half an hour to lie down and watch the sky. Against the azure blue sky, those white August cumulus clouds are a constantly changing work of art. Swifts will have finished breeding by now and young birds will be ganging-up and whizzing through the sky calling to one another as they go, their screams howls of delight as they revel in the freedom of flight. A little more prosaic but watch and listen for the shorter swoops and associated twittering of House Martins. If the twittering becomes louder and more intense it could mean a Hobby is close by, their calls warning one another of potential danger from this predatory falcon.

Homeward bound

From mid-July wading birds will be heading south through Hertfordshire and Middlesex. During this time, they will be looking out for opportunities to feed before continuing their long journeys as far away as Africa. To catch a glimpse of these birds, head to places that have water bodies with muddy margins where insects will be abundant on which the birds will feed. At Amwell Nature Reserve, the Trust drops the water level specially to create these conditions and with a few visits you should be lucky enough to encounter Common and Green Sandpipers, Redshank, Dunlin and maybe even a noisy Greenshank, tyew, tyew, tyew-ing as it flies.

Outstanding Orchids

Orchids may have a reputation as an exotic flower but did you know there are over 50 native species in the UK? Let's take a tour with our Nature Reserves team as they share some of our sites where you will find a particular orchid and discover the actions they are taking to manage habitats for the protection of these blooming wonderful sights. A majority of these reserves are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), reflecting their national importance and highlighting their high conservation value and need to be protected.



Heath Spotted-orchid Frogmore Meadows Nature Reserve, SSSI, between Chenies and Latimer

These uncommon orchids, with colours ranging from pale purple through to white, with small pink markings and up to 45cm high (but can be much shorter), are found in a small area of dry grassland that is quite vulnerable to Blackthorn scrub invasion. So, in addition to the cattle grazing, we run work parties to remove the young Blackthorn, with a practice known as 'tree popping'

Anna Daniels, Reserves Officer



FIND OUT MORE

Online

To discover more about our orchid population, visit our Wildlife Explorer pages. hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer

For more information on the reserves mentioned here, go to hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves

To help us manage these sites, sign up to be a work party volunteer at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering

Heath Spotted-orchid © Vaughn Matthews



White Helleborine Fox Covert Nature Reserve, SSSI, near Royston

Shady conditions sometimes called 'glancing light' of the Beech woodland at Fox Covert are enjoyed by these orchids, which are usually in flower by the end of May/beginning of June and reach a height of up to 60cm. An increase to the number of visitors to the reserve means that we've introduced path management to encourage people to keep to the footpath. This is important not just when the orchids are in flower but also for the rest of the year to prevent soil compaction and its impact on the plants. The other threat to the orchids here is the Privet that has a tendency to spread across the site - we run two work parties a year to stop that happening.

Sam Henderson, Assistant Reserves Officer



© Sam Henderson



© Jenny Sherwen

Early Marsh-orchid Blagrove Common Nature Reserve, SSSI, near Sandon

We manage this wet grassland with cattle grazing in the summer through to autumn. This improves growing conditions by reducing the more dominant plants such as False Oat-grass and Meadowsweet, making space for the Early Marsh-orchid to thrive, as well as the Southern Marsh-orchid, Common Spotted-orchid and their hybrids which can all be found here. We also cut the rushes to prevent them smothering the flowers, as well as manual scrub removal to keep that down and, again, this makes the reserve better for orchids as well as species like the Marbled White butterfly.

Kathryn Dunnett, Reserves Officer



Fragrant-orchid Hexton Chalk Pit Nature Reserve, Hexton

Hexton Chalk Pit is arguably our best orchid site. Fragrant-orchids live up to their name with a sweet orangey smell that becomes particularly strong in the evening. These are classic orchids of chalk grassland, and we manage this habitat with sheep grazing. This used to be supplemented by the local rabbit population, but in recent years this seems to have struggled. So, to compensate for that, in spring we tried a manual cut on a small area of the northern compartment. We'll see how this responds and may introduce manual cutting on rotation until the rabbit population recovers. We've always managed the scrub on site manually using this practice to stop it invading the orchid-rich grassland. Last winter we tried using goats on the northern compartment to target the scrub, and we'll be monitoring the results over the year. If successful then we're hopeful there will need to be fewer scrub removing work parties!

Dan Townsend, Senior Reserves Officer



© Ian Carle

Why We're Asking the Next Government to Make Protecting our Chalk Rivers a Priority

Chalk rivers are one of the rarest habitats on earth. There are only 260 chalk rivers in the entire world and England is home to 85% of them. In Hertfordshire and Middlesex we are custodians of 10% of this precious global resource. For the Trust, looking after and securing the future of these waterways is a top priority – but we can't do this alone.

In their natural state, cool, crystal-clear waters flow over gravelly beds, streaming through white-flowered Water-crowfoot and Watercress in serene lowland landscapes. These rivers are extremely wildlife rich and provide lots of ecosystem benefits for people such as **clean water, carbon capture, flood protection and climate resilience.**

Our chalk rivers should be fast flowing, with clean plentiful water rising out of an unpolluted aquifer. The head of the river would move naturally with the seasons, creating a diverse mix of permanently wet and temporarily dry sections that support a unique variety of plants and animals. Flowing across natural, undeveloped floodplains and weaving through habitats like wet woodland, reedbed and marshy grassland, these rivers would add dynamism to the landscape, providing an ever-evolving space for wildlife to move and migrate.

But the current condition of our chalk rivers is far from this...

Unfortunately, due to human pressures, less than a quarter of our chalk rivers are in good condition and none of these are within Hertfordshire or Middlesex. The biggest threats are to **flow, quality and physical habitat**, the trinity of ecological health for a pristine chalk river, caused by:

Pollution

Pollution from towns and cities, road run-off, agricultural activities and sewage are adding more pressure on chalk river systems. This affects 30% of our chalk rivers.

Abstraction

Over 60% of water for public and commercial use is abstracted from the ground and directly from rivers. Large volumes of water are being taken out of the system, more quickly than they can naturally be replaced.

Modification

Our rivers have been dammed up by weirs and fords, their beds and gradients dredged out, their courses artificially altered, their floodplains drained and soils compacted, invasive species introduced that erode banks and predate native wildlife. All this human activity has stopped our rivers from functioning properly. This affects 100% of our chalk rivers.

Add to this, the South East has one of the highest water consumption rates in the country, is one of the driest UK regions and its population is increasing, putting consistent pressure on our chalk river systems.

So what can we do about it?

The Trust has been working since 2012 to raise awareness of these issues and deliver improvements, and we have recently been awarded £1.7 million from the Species Survival Fund (delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund on behalf of Defra) to restore chalk rivers in the region and help halt the decline of over 109 different species.

We're removing weirs and barriers to enable fish passage; reconnecting rivers to their floodplains; reintroducing lost, native species such as critically endangered Water Vole

and eradicating invasive non-native species which limit recovery of our river systems.

We're supporting landowners to deliver restoration work; we train citizen scientists to monitor our rivers and target remedial action; we coordinate a partnership network; carry out policy and advocacy work, and liaise with regulators. The Trust also works with key sectors that have a big influence on chalk river health, to help shape their activities and amplify the work we are delivering directly.

We're making progress but action is required across all levels of society and that's why we're calling for:

1. Bespoke legal protections for all our chalk rivers that protect them from over-abstraction and pollution and drives investment by water companies into these special ecosystems.
2. Environmental regulators adequately resourced and funded to enforce current legislation and hold polluters to account (with polluters paying penalties that reflect the true environmental damage being caused).
3. Targets to put our rivers in good ecological condition brought forward.
4. Water companies investing in necessary infrastructure to keep pace with population growth and climate change, rapidly scaling up and prioritising the use of nature-based solutions over hard infrastructure where appropriate.
5. Sufficient budget to enable landholders to adopt water-friendly farming practices across chalk river catchments, to support landholders to reduce their impacts on rivers and restore vital habitats.

We need momentum and resources to continue to build so that the next decade for our chalk rivers can be a brighter one, with swifter delivery of jointly agreed recovery plans so we can see them start to thrive once more.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Download the Chalk Stream Strategy at ow.ly/UPor50S9NpY

Discover how the Trust is managing the impact of invasive species on our chalk rivers at ow.ly/vNOH50S9Nvs

Weird and Wonderful Wildlife

Birds of Prey

Birds of prey are amongst our most enigmatic and attractive bird species; a sight of one adds a thrilling slice of wildness to an otherwise ordinary day. As apex predators, they play an important role in maintaining the environmental health of a habitat by removing old and weak animals from prey populations. This also helps to keep these populations under control. Further to this, they are indicator species: by monitoring their numbers, we can get an insight into how healthy an ecosystem is, and the impacts of climate change, persecution, pollution and habitat loss.

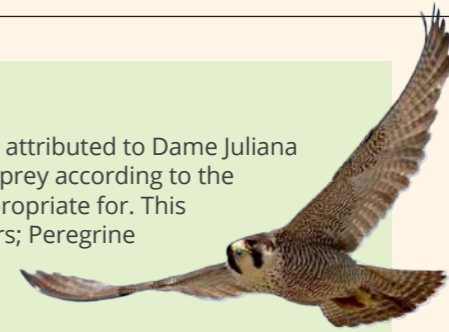
They are also fascinating creatures! Read on for some weird and wonderful facts about our birds of prey.



Kestrel © Russell Savory

Status

In 1486, *The Book of St Albans* (generally attributed to Dame Juliana Berners) set out a hierarchy of birds of prey according to the social ranks each bird was deemed appropriate for. This included: Eagles or Merlins for Emperors; Peregrine Falcons for Earls; Hobbies for young men; Goshawks for Yeoman (the class between the gentry and labourers); male Kestrels for poor men; Sparrowhawks for Priests; Kestrels (in general) for servants.



Did you know?

Hen Harriers usually form monogamous pairs, but there are exceptions to this rule. On the island of Orkney in Scotland, there exists a population of Hen Harriers that are renowned for being polygynous. The males mate with multiple females – anywhere from three to seven of them!

The most widely distributed bird of prey in the world is the Peregrine Falcon. It inhabits every continent except Antarctica!

Peregrine © Dave Newbold

Eyesight and hunting

Birds of prey were used in falconry for their speed and excellent vision when hunting. For example, a Kestrel can detect a beetle from 50 metres away! However, birds of prey can't move their large eyes around like humans can, so instead they have extra bones in their necks which allow them to move their heads around to get a better view.

Goshawks' eyes change from bright yellow to red as they get older. Although seen as fierce hunters, and often at the top of the avian food chain, Goshawks (especially their eggs and young) can be predated by large owls, eagles and Pine Martens.

The Osprey is the only diurnal (active during the day) bird of prey that feeds exclusively on fish. Its reversible outer toe, which can face forwards or backwards, helps it to grapple with this slippery (and wriggly) food! It is the only bird of prey with this kind of toe – an adaptation developed specifically for this purpose.

The Peregrine Falcon can reach an incredible speed of over 200mph when diving towards prey, making it one of the fastest animals on earth!

Size

Most female birds of prey are at least a third larger than their male counterparts.

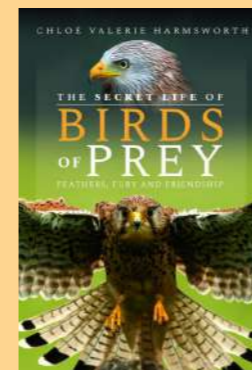
The Merlin is the UK's smallest bird of prey at 25–30cm in length, with a wingspan of 50–62cm. It isn't much larger than a Blackbird.

The White-tailed Eagle is the UK's largest bird of prey. Its epic wingspan of 200–240cm is the reason why it is called the 'flying barn door'. Its average life span is 21 years. However, the oldest recorded individual was around 32 years old!

You can see several bird of prey species in Hertfordshire and Middlesex. For example, Osprey visit Panshanger Park, near Hertford, and Stocker's Lake in Rickmansworth, in the spring and autumn. Visit Long Deans Nature Reserve in Hemel Hempstead and you are likely to spot Kestrels, Buzzards and Red Kites soaring in the skies above. You can also see Peregrine Falcons hunting around St Albans Cathedral and the YMCA in Watford!



Osprey © Emyr Evans



Written by Chloé Valerie Harmsworth, HERC's Business Manager and author of 'The Secret Life of Birds of Prey: Feathers, Fury and Friendship' (tinyurl.com/bdfkapap). See more on Instagram @chloevalerienatureart



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more about three of our area's birds of prey at ow.ly/uQ5b50S9NEF

Find out more about Peregrine Falcons at ow.ly/ZT0A50S9Nz7

Annual Review 2023/2024

Looking back over the past year and reflecting on what has been achieved, it is clear that we need to start by saying a big THANK YOU to all our staff, volunteers, members and supporters. Together, everyone has helped enable us to achieve an enormous amount for wildlife, our local habitats and people.

From a successful fundraising campaign to buy a new nature reserve to first records, from restored habitats to newly created ones and from new associations with communities to encouraging a new generation of wildlife enthusiasts, this is a selection of just some of the highlights in the 2023/2024 financial year.



Supported by over 23,500 members



Assisted by over 1,110 active volunteers

Nature's Recovery

During the year, we've made some great strides to ensure nature has a place to thrive on our nature reserves and in the wider countryside. Wild places across Hertfordshire and Middlesex have provided a year of exciting wildlife sightings, recordings and discoveries.

Feathered friends

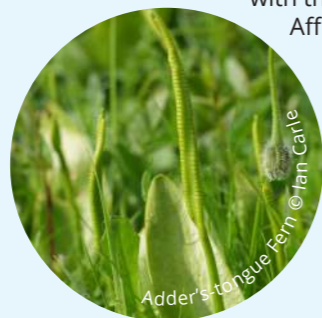
- A male Bittern was booming at Amwell trying to attract a mate, following over 20 years of work to create and manage their reedbed habitat.
- Following our collaboration with St Albans Cathedral to install a nesting tray in 2022, three Peregrine Falcon chicks fledged in 2023. A webcam on the tray went live in April 2023 with over 378,000 views.
- At Hilfield Park Reservoir, two Black-necked Grebe chicks fledged at what is the only nesting site in southern Britain.



Meadow Saxifrage at Archers Green © Steven Werrell

Fabulous flora

- Scarce Tufted-sedge is now the focus of a species recovery scheme. It's critically endangered and only found at one site in Hertfordshire in the whole of the UK.
- Meadow Saxifrage, a nationally scarce plant, has been found at our newest nature reserve, Archers Green.
- The rare Adder's-tongue Fern is doing well at Hexton Chalk Pit.



Adder's-tongue Fern © Ian Carle

Intriguing invertebrates

- Lesser Bloody-nosed Beetle was found at Aldbury Nowers for the first time since 1991.
- The spider *Dictyna pusilla* was found at King's Meads. It is a new record for Hertfordshire and is one of the 31 spider species of principal importance in England.
- A survey found that Panshanger Park is internationally important for the diversity of saproxylic beetles, dependent on its dead and decaying woody habitats. Hertfordshire's first Dragonfly Hotspot was created at the Park in partnership with the British Dragonfly Society and there are now 19 species breeding regularly.



Lesser Bloody-nosed Beetle © Ian Carle

Magnificent mammals

- Water Vole reintroductions have gone from strength to strength, thanks to collaborations with the River Ver Society and the River Beane Association. They are now on 7km of the River Ver, a 150% increase on the previous year, and on 3.2km of the River Beane, following their reintroduction in 2022.
- 300 Hazel trees have been planted at Balls Wood to increase the habitat for Dormice.

More space for nature

- We bought Archers Green Nature Reserve, following a successful £500,000 fundraising campaign, which will now be grazed to allow a diverse range of plants and animals to flourish.
- A major project created over 600m of new wetland habitats at Hilfield Park Reservoir in collaboration with the site owners and funders, Affinity Water.
- 16.5km of the rivers Mimram and Ash were surveyed to assess their potential as a Chalk River Biobank, and we started a new citizen science project to monitor the health of our chalk rivers.

Wilder Communities

We all have a part to play in building a wilder Hertfordshire and Middlesex – here's how people-power helped nature's recovery over the past year.

Engaging and inspiring

- Nextdoor Nature projects in Watford and Dacorum, focused on working in the wider community, have proved hugely successful in broadening the reach of the Trust.
- We launched our new Wilder Schools programme, training 15 volunteers to advise on school grounds and wildlife.
- Our Panshanger Park project in partnership with Tarmac led to the planting of 17,000 trees by the community to create the new 'Queen's Wood'.
- In July, hundreds of visitors enjoyed Wildfest in Cassiobury Park which brought together conservation groups that work for wildlife across the area.



Family crafts at Wildfest © Heidi Mansell

Standing up for nature

Creating a vibrant and sustainable future for wildlife means putting nature's recovery at the heart of local decision-making.

- We ran the highest profile campaign in the history of the Trust to protect Broadwater Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest from a development proposal from Hillingdon Council which would devastate the wildlife value. The fight continues – see page 4.
- Reviewed planning and infrastructure proposals, including local plans, minerals plans and neighbourhood plans.
- Regular discussion with local and national politicians to inform policy and decision-making so it is the best it can be for wildlife, and contributing to the national campaign for the General Election to ask people to 'vote for nature'.

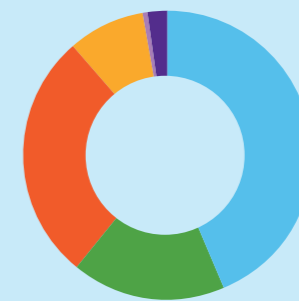


Tree planting at Panshanger Park

Financial summary

Our Strategy sets out the need to create more space for nature and to inspire more people to take action for habitat and species recovery. This action is urgently needed but as the scale of the nature crisis has grown, so have our costs and it is costing us more each day to deliver our work. While our unrestricted income in the last year, thanks in most part to our membership, was around £1.6m, we ended the year with a deficit of around £240,000. Our major appeal in 2024 will be focussing on asking our supporters to help us to continue to support our local wildlife and wild spaces.

The Year In Numbers



Income:
TOTAL £2,859k

£1,252k
Membership Subscriptions

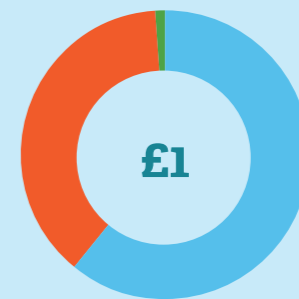
£790k
Donations, Gifts & Grants

£22k
Fundraising Activities

£494k
Fees & Contracts

£244k
Legacies

£57k
Investment & other income



£1
Expenditure:
TOTAL £2,831k
For every £1 the Trust spends...

61p
Conservation & Nature Reserves

38p
Raising Funds

1p
Governance

We are very grateful to all our members, donors, grant funders and other supporters over the year.

The financial information above has been taken from the draft accounts for the year. Full details of the Trust's finances can be found at bit.ly/43JWrTt



Nextdoor Nature Project – what if we really could change the world?

With our Nextdoor Nature project, funded by The National Heritage Lottery Fund, coming to an end this month, it is time to take a little look back on the last couple of years.

Since the project began back in 2022, our two Wilder Community Officers, Esme Staunton Howe and Lea Ellis have been working with communities in both Watford and Dacorum and they have met a lot of passionate people along the way. The premise of the project was simple: empower communities to take action for nature where they live and work.

Here are just a couple of stories we would like to share of action being taken.



Evelyn Sharp House



New planters at Evelyn Sharp House

Cardo (formally Osborne Property Services), Dacorum

The company Cardo provide maintenance services to social housing sites across Dacorum and reached out to Lea to ask for her support in improving some of the grounds for wildlife. An initial site was identified, Evelyn Sharp House in Hemel Hempstead, and Lea worked with residents and local volunteers to create a vision and plan to transform an area of outside space.

On a sunny day last autumn, around 20 people came together to create a bug hotel, plant 60 tree saplings, 1000 crocus bulbs and wildflower seeds. Whether it was digging, painting a planter or just talking about and sharing their love of nature and wildlife, everyone enjoyed the day.

John, resident of Evelyn Sharp House said, "I think this is a marvellous idea, we don't do enough for wildlife."

Pete, another resident said, "This space is ideal for people to come out and spend their time, and it's great to brighten it up a little bit."

Annie Smith, Community Partnerships and Wellbeing Officer – Arts and Culture Dacorum Borough Council, said, "It's brilliant to get organisations together, along with the Council, because working in partnership is always so much stronger, you reach more people, address more needs, it just works so well."

Plans are in the pipeline to make the next Cardo maintained site wilder - Gravel Lane Supported Housing.



Laura and Lucy, tree planting on the River Colne



Youth Volunteers tree planting on the River Colne

Youth Volunteering Programme, Watford

At Queens' Secondary School in Watford a small number of Year 12 students struggle every year to secure work experience placements. Esme worked with six students to create an 'in-school' placement where the students devised their own research to find out how young people felt about local nature. Their research found that young people felt there were no local volunteering opportunities for them to learn more about local wildlife and that schools needed more support to be wildlife friendly so that children could experience more nature in their day to day.

Esme reached out to The River Colne CIC and Watford Borough Council to explore the opportunities of creating volunteering placements for young people, alongside the existing conservation work happening on the River Colne. These organisations worked together to secure funding to trial a Youth Volunteering Programme and 10 young people have been meeting once a month since March to carry out practical conservation work along the River Colne.

Dona, who has been volunteering on the scheme said, "I've learnt how to use new tools and where and when to plant certain plants, what they do and most importantly – the importance of river conservation and management. I've enjoyed all tasks, but especially the tree planting, as you get to watch your work grow and hopefully the tree will be permanent so in the future, I can revisit it and for the meantime watch it grow as I walk my dog."

Ensuring that action is led by the people involved, right from the start, is how we make sure that there's a sustainable legacy. It's not up to us to say what should or shouldn't happen in a particular area. What do the people need? We help them work out what's possible, what's desirable, what's best for nature and for them – and then we can help them find resources, tools, funding and other organisations that might work well with them.

These are examples of initiatives and projects that will not just continue, but will grow.

If you would like any support with wilding an area local to you, please get in touch with one of the team at wildersupport@hmwt.org

Or for more information of working with your community visit the Nextdoor Nature Hub nextdoornaturehub.org.uk

One Quick Win for you!



'Tegelwippen', 'tile whipping' or 'whipping away' paving stones, is a national competition that has helped the Netherlands reach environmental targets by... yep removing garden paving! Tegelwippen is a light-hearted Dutch contest seeking to restore greenery. Every paving stone gone is a win for biodiversity, facilitating water infiltration in the soil and mitigating heat. Municipalities compete to get rid of the most paved infrastructure with results ranked on the 'Tile Table', currently dominated by Venlo in Limburg (14,636 tiles whipped away).

There is no doubt that we are happier people when we live in green surroundings and each slab has 60 square centimetres (give or take) of potential happiness!

Our Wild Supporters

Find out how people have been champions for wildlife in Hertfordshire and Middlesex

Your membership matters

We couldn't do our work without the support of our wonderful members like you. We have a fantastic community of local people all working to help wildlife – and we want to share your stories.



Meet Lorraine Kirk – member for 32 years

I joined the Trust more than 30 years ago when I moved to the area. I think we're so lucky to have an organisation whose primary focus is our local environment. The area around where I live in Hoddesdon is rich in wildlife compared to other parts of the UK and I worry a lot about the disappearance of various species in the three decades or so that I've lived here.

I don't see Turtle Doves or Glow-worms anymore. There used to be hundreds of frogs near Amwell and I don't see any anymore. I have no doubt that the situation would be even worse if it wasn't for the likes of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and other locally based groups that work in partnership to protect and enhance nature, as well as to educate the next generation.

Every nature reserve that exists is a beacon of hope and makes me feel a little bit more optimistic. I feel very cheered when I read a success story in Wildlife Matters.

I spend a major part of my leisure walking in nature, bird watching, and in recent years I've got more into wildflowers and butterflies as well. I set out from my house, avoiding the use of the car and I love the fact that there are lots of protected spaces in walking distance. Trees, meadows and wild spaces lift my spirit and my hope is that gradually more people will start to feel like I do.



Meet Andy Wells – new member and volunteer

Now that I am retired, my New Year's resolution is to volunteer outdoors for three local charities. I have just started as a volunteer in the garden at Grebe House and am also helping with Peregrine Watch at St Albans Cathedral. I am a member of the local Ver Valley Society and it has been interesting to learn about the River Ver, its plants and wildlife, and to be involved in the river's conservation. I also volunteer for Green House, a local community hub, which promotes sustainability.

I used to commute on the train every day to an office-based job and had very little time to be outside, this made me realise what a privilege it is to have access to the natural world. I love being outdoors and want to learn more about plants, birds and insects.

I am loving the experience of volunteering and feel privileged to be here.



Meet George Yiacoupis – recruiter

Congratulations and thank you to George Yiacoupis who celebrates 10 years of working as a membership recruiter for our partners Wildlife Fundraising Central. Over the last decade, George has introduced thousands of individuals, families and businesses

to the Trust and inspired them to become part of our wonderful community. Thanks George, and here's to continuing your service to wildlife for many more years to come.

Fun fact, George is the same age as the Trust – he recently celebrated his 60th birthday in the same year we celebrate our 60th Anniversary!

In remembrance

We would like to thank Margery Rigby, Judith Arthur and Philippa Bagnall for kindly leaving a gift to the Trust in their wills. We are extremely grateful to all of them for supporting the Trust in this special way. Our condolences go to their friends and family.



£ The Mayor's Fundraising

A huge thank you to the Mayor of Hertford, Councillor Vicky Smith, who has completed a year of fundraising for the Trust and Mudlarks with two final projects.

On Saturday 6 April, Cllr Smith welcomed over 70 people to a fun packed and music filled Cèilidh at the Corn Exchange, where guests danced through the evening to two sets of joyful live music.

On Saturday 20 April, the mayor and 5 of her friends walked an incredible 26 miles along the Lea Valley, starting in Stratford and ending in Hertford.

Over the course of the year, Councillor Smith has raised over £3,500, which is an amazing achievement – thank you for everything you have done to protect local wildlife!

Will you become a Wildlife Guardian?



Become a Wildlife Guardian and champion the protection of Hertfordshire and Middlesex wildlife!



With an annual contribution of £500 or more, you'll come together with like-minded supporters to ensure the Trust can plan for the future and continue to look after the most special places across the counties. Gain insights from the Trust's leadership, receive exclusive invitations to educational events, and stay informed with regular updates on the impact of your support. Your generosity will ensure the preservation of precious habitats and rare species. Together, let's safeguard the natural treasures of Hertfordshire and Middlesex!

Find out more at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/guardians or email Alice Bradley at alice.bradley@hmwt.org

What's On

We've already got lots of exciting events scheduled for summer and into early autumn and we're adding more all the time. Here's a taster of what's on offer but make sure to check our events pages on the website to see what else is happening near you.

Many of our events are free to attend and lots are suitable for families. Please note, places are limited, so we encourage you to sign up as soon as you can to avoid disappointment.

July

- 20 July** **Dragonfly Walks**, Panshanger Park
- 27 July** **History and Heritage with Royalty, a walk and talk themed on Queen Victoria's visit to Panshanger Park**, Panshanger Park
- 31 July** **Summer Tree Identification Workshop**, Aston and Astonbury Woods

August

- 2 August** **Bat Walk**, Fairlands Valley Park, Stevenage
- 6 August** **Discover Hedgehogs**, Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary
- 9 August** **Smartphone Safari**, Verulamium Park, St Albans
- 17 August** **Late Summer Stroll**, Thorley Wash Nature Reserve
- 17 August** **Dragonfly Walk**, Panshanger Park
- 17 August** **Bat Walk**, Waterford Heath
- 27 August** **Discover Hedgehogs**, Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary
- 30 August** **Bat Walk**, Panshanger Park



Life at the Lake

Throughout the school summer holidays, 'Life at the Lake' will be taking place at Stocker's Lake, **every Wednesday from 24 July until 28 August.**



Emperor Dragonfly © Toby Hill



On **13 July**, enjoy a wild day out exploring nature in Cassiobury Park, taking part in fun activities and finding out more about the local organisations working for wildlife.

September

- 7 September** **Nature Writing Workshop**, Cassiobury Park, Watford
- 14 September** **Dragonfly Walk**, Panshanger Park
- 14 September** **Hedgehogs and How to Help Them**, Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary
- 16 September** **Bat Walk**, Home Farm Glamping
- 21 September** **Bat Ecology and Surveying Workshop**, Bayfordbury Campus

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We will be hosting our next AGM on **28 September**. Please save the date and look out for the notice, further details of the AGM, and how to book on our website from 2 September 2024 – hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more about our events programme and book hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events

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