

Celebrating the wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex

wildlifematters

Winter 2024



**Herts &
Middlesex**
Wildlife Trust

**What's
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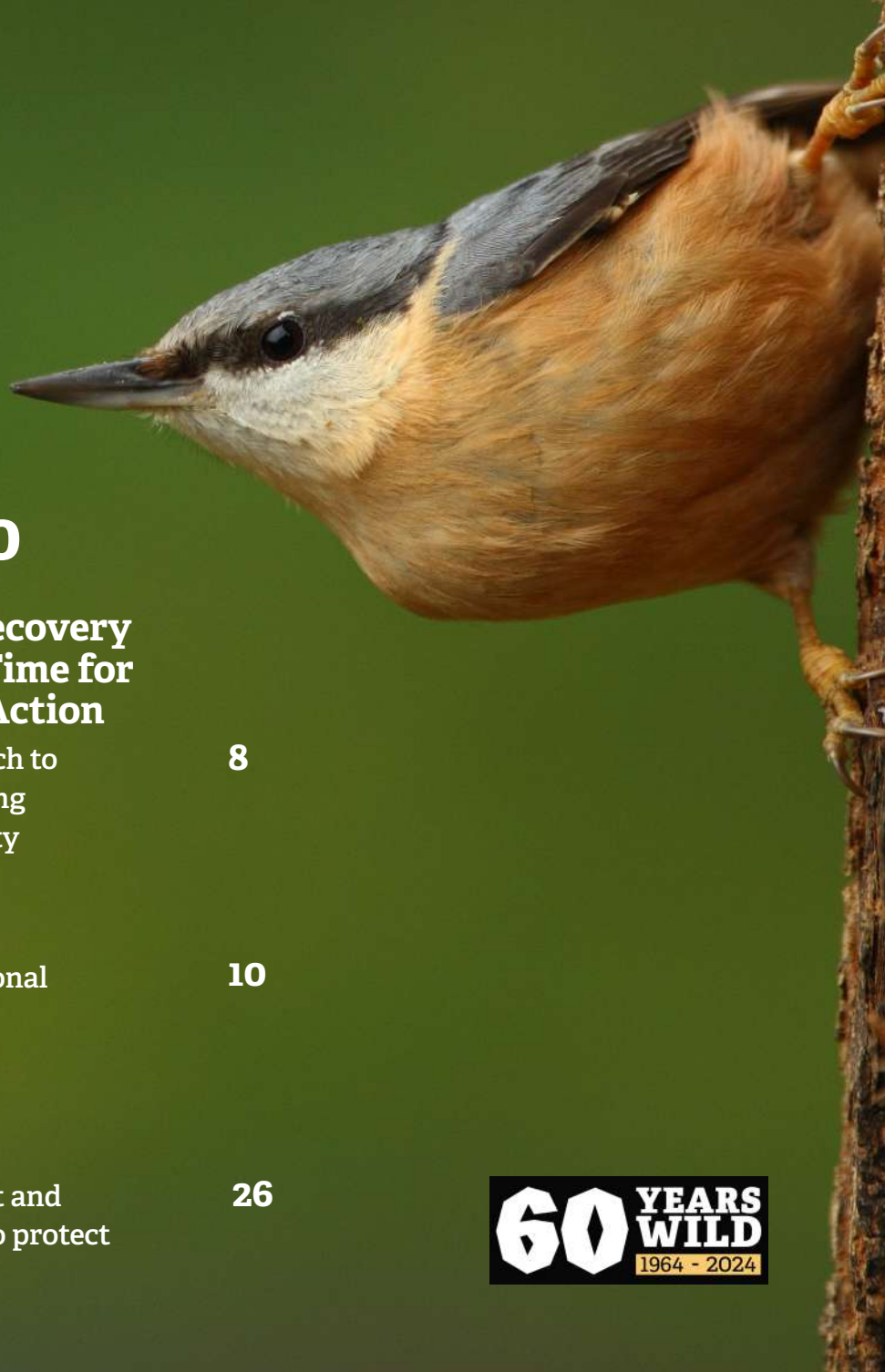
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Welcome



Sir David Attenborough, President Emeritus of The Wildlife Trusts, said *"It's surely our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us, but for all life on Earth."*

That responsibility doesn't just sit on the shoulders of The Wildlife Trusts of course, everyone can help give nature a future. What we do is find ways to enable people to play their part – from our members and volunteers, to businesses, councils, hospitals, farmers and community groups. This edition of *Wildlife Matters* celebrates some of the great partnerships that we have.

Hot on the heels of our successful 'Nextdoor Nature' projects in Dacorum and Watford, I'm delighted to say that we have been awarded a three-year grant from the National Community Lottery Fund and Swire Charitable Trust for a follow-on project in Watford. Our Citizen Science project focussing on chalk rivers continues thanks to external funding and is finding new ways to inspire people to learn about these special habitats.

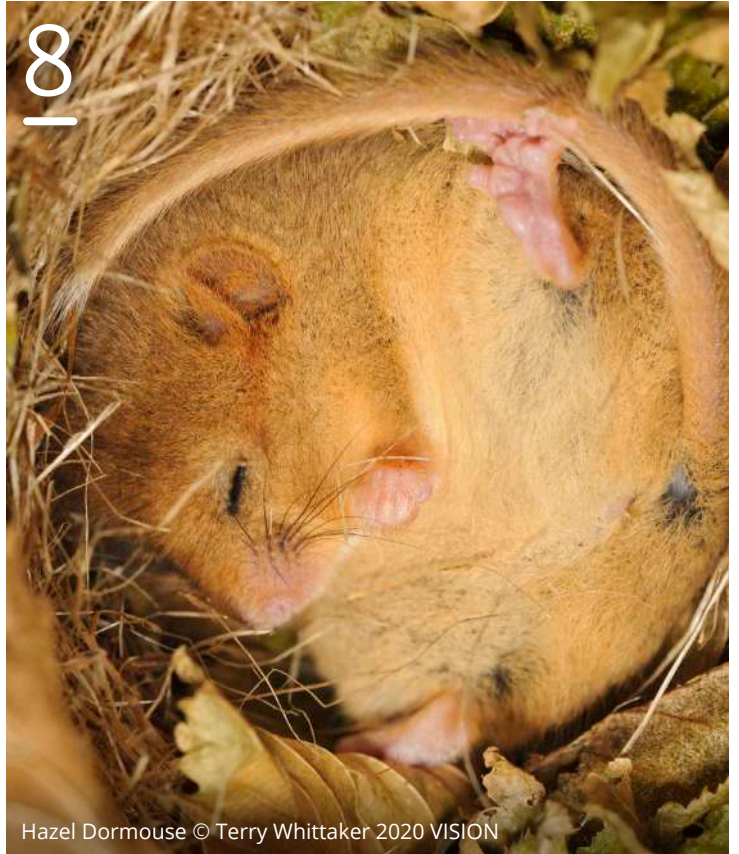
We work with a wide variety of businesses who support our work as Business Members, by sponsoring our events, or with staff fundraising. Recently we received a £3,800 donation from new supporter Copper in the Clouds through the '1% for the Planet' scheme. You can read more about this and how your business can get involved on page 18.

Whilst we have a lot of success in securing external funding for projects, the day-to-day running costs of the charity continue to rise, and as you'll see from our ongoing appeal we need to increase this area of income. Thank you if you have already donated. We are over halfway towards our target and still need your help. Please keep supporting the campaign and sharing it too.

It's that time of year when visiting woodlands can be really enchanting, so I do hope you are able to visit one of our reserves and enjoy the autumn colours, fungi, winter birds and the peaceful surroundings.

As ever, thank you for your support.

Lesley Davies
Chief Executive



Hazel Dormouse © Terry Whittaker 2020 VISION



Volunteers looking at the River Beane

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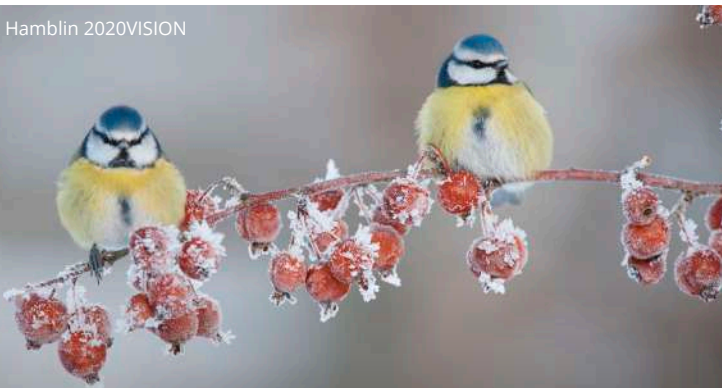
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Nursery Web Spider © Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography

Blue Tits © Mark Hamblin 2020VISION



Give the Gift of Wildlife this Festive Season

Our wildlife sponsorship packs and gift memberships make great gifts for someone special.

Wildlife Sponsorships - There are seven sponsorship packs to choose from and each contains a personalised certificate, fact cards, a beautiful photo of your sponsored local species and more.

Gift Membership - With individual, joint and family membership available, there is a membership for all your loved ones.

For further information and to explore the full range of wildlife gifts online, please visit: hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/shop or call **01727 858901 (Option 1)**

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: Nuthatch © Luke Massey 2020VISION

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Transport yourself to an ancient woodland setting, brimming with wildlife, and discover the challenge to ensure its longevity



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



Threat to Broadwater Lake

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. Originally, it was expected to be considered by the Planning Committee in March 2024 but this did not happen. With your support, 1400 objections to the development have been raised, but despite this it appears that Hillingdon Council is still trying to make the scheme fit at Broadwater Lake SSSI and is preparing an amended submission. At the time of going to press, we do not have any information on the timings for this but as soon as we do our campaign pages will be updated.



Please keep up to date with the latest news on our campaign and how you can add your voice to stand up for wildlife at ow.ly/IFS650S9Lew

Photo: At the end of August, our CEO, Lesley Davies and Chair of Trustees, Peter Tallantire met with newly-elected Labour MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip, Danny Beales, to talk with him about this protected site and the threat it faces.

A New and Collaborative Approach to Improving the Health of the River Mimram

Thanks to funding from the Environment Agency, the Trust is working in collaboration with and supporting landholders, communities, and other stakeholders, to improve the flow, resilience and ecological health of the River Mimram, which begins near Whitwell and joins the River Lea near Hertford. The Trust's newly-appointed Chalk Stream and Farm Advisory Officer, Heidi Mansell is leading this work and the delivery of the Catchment Based Approach Chalk Stream Strategy, with calls for chalk streams in England to be given enhanced environmental status and protection.



River Mimram © Peter Tatton



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/chalk-rivers-and-farm-advisory



Bug hunt at Wildfest © Debbie Bigg

Wildfest 2024



Thank you to everyone who came along to see us and fellow conservation organisations at our Wildfest event that was held back in July, in Watford's Cassiobury Park. We were delighted to meet so many individuals and families and to share the joys of wildlife and nature, through different fun activities, including bug hunts, an interactive animal olympics quiz, nature, bird and butterfly walks, as well as craft and drumming sessions. This was kindly supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of our Nextdoor Nature project.



Panshanger Park © Jen Gilbert

Changes at Panshanger Park

The Trust's involvement at Panshanger Park has been instrumental in achieving many brilliant things for people and wildlife. Over the last decade, its owners Tarmac have funded a People and Wildlife Officer, hosted by the Trust, and in just the last couple of years they have played an instrumental part in the planting of a new woodland, creation of a new Dragonfly Hotspot and surpassing the milestone of having more than 200 volunteers engaged in looking after this important and historic landscape.

The Trust continues to play an important role providing expert ecological advice and other guidance to the

park team. Tarmac's site managers Maydencroft are expanding their day-to-day running of the park with the addition of a new Community Ranger. This role is already supporting the fantastic volunteer programmes established by the Trust to deliver practical habitat management, monitoring and engagement activities across the site. The Trust continues to lead support for our *Wildlife Watch* initiative until the end of the year.

Of course, Panshanger Park remains a wonderful and accessible place for all of our members to visit, and a fabulous site for a myriad of wildlife species.



Male Peregrine © Patrick Wainwright

Peregrines on the Box

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have spotted, the Trust's Heidi Mansell on the BBC's One Show, talking about our involvement with the breeding Peregrines at St Albans Cathedral, with Presenter and Cameraman, Hamza Yassin. The piece aired on 4 October.



Help for Sick and Injured Wildlife

At the Trust, we are often contacted by members of the public when they come into contact with birds and animals in need. Whilst we can't provide this type of care ourselves, there are many wonderful charities that can. One of these is Pumpkin Wildlife Hospital, which works to save and rehabilitate wildlife at its base in Rickmansworth. The charity have recently refurbished their site, built new enclosures, made areas to treat wildlife and are now fully operational, treating, rehabilitating and releasing wildlife in need.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more at
thewildlifehospital.org.uk

UK NEWS

UK UPDATE

Community gardening with Avon Wildlife Trust



A Success Story: Nature's recovery powered by communities

Examples of Nextdoor Nature projects across the UK

In two years, the UK-wide Nextdoor Nature project, backed by a £5 million grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, has empowered over 400 communities to restore and enhance nature in their local areas. This achievement far exceeds the original target of engaging 200 local groups, demonstrating the project's impact.

At the heart of Nextdoor Nature is the dedication to equipping individuals and communities with the skills and resources needed to take meaningful environmental action. To achieve this, community organisers were funded in every UK Wildlife Trust, with a focus on reaching communities that have traditionally been excluded from environmental and conservation efforts.

The Nextdoor Nature project has much in common with the grassroots of The Wildlife Trusts movement where passionate local people come together to create positive change for nature. For those who get involved, they also create heart-warming connections, experiences and memories too.

The stories shared here are just a glimpse of what has been achieved

through Nextdoor Nature. From a mental health support group in Durham finding solace in newly accessible gardens, to schools in Kent, the Isles of Scilly, and North Wales engaging in species reintroduction and habitat creation – each success story is a testament to the power of community-driven conservation.

A key measure of Nextdoor Nature's success lies in its sustainability. The project has established connections with other organisations and resources to ensure the continuation of this vital work. Notably, 86% of UK Wildlife Trusts have secured or are actively seeking funding to retain community organisers, ensuring the momentum built during these two years continues to grow.

Thanks to Nextdoor Nature, Wildlife Trusts have made a cultural shift as a movement towards a community organising or 'Team Wilder' approach, that is helping to make environmental conservation project more open and accessible to a diverse range of communities. The legacy of Nextdoor Nature is clear: empowered communities, equipped with the knowledge and passion to protect and restore nature, are now driving lasting environmental change across the UK.

- Gwent has trained the Newport community in bee and butterfly surveying, enabling them to contribute valuable data to citizen science initiatives.
- Hertfordshire and Middlesex facilitated AQA accreditation in River Management for eight young people, opening doors to future conservation opportunities.
- In Radnorshire, a thriving grassland and verges group successfully negotiated reduced mowing with the local council, fostering healthier ecosystems.
- Warwickshire inspired local people to take ownership of their green spaces, leading to the independent launch of a Tree Mapping project to address the impacts of Ash die-back.
- Gloucestershire supported the Guardians of the River Chelt, helping them move toward becoming a fully autonomous, constituted group.
- Lincolnshire has developed a robust network of Nextdoor Nature Champions who are spreading their conservation message across the county.

UK UPDATE

New report reveals massive carbon stores in UK seabeds

A pioneering series of reports have revealed the vast amount of carbon stored within UK marine habitats, and the importance of protecting UK seas for tackling climate change.

The seas around the UK and Isle of Man cover nearly 885,000 square kilometres – over three times the size of the UK's land mass. This vast area is host to different habitats that sequester and store carbon, known as 'blue carbon'. They include seabed sediments, seagrass meadows, saltmarshes, kelp forests, intertidal seaweed beds, maerl beds and biogenic reefs, such as mussel beds and Honeycomb Worm reefs.

The Blue Carbon Mapping Project, completed by the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) on behalf of The Wildlife Trusts, WWF and the RSPB, is the

first time a country has provided a comprehensive estimate of the carbon captured and stored in its seas, including within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

The report finds that 244 million tonnes of organic carbon are stored in just the top 10 centimetres of seabed sediments – principally made of mud – plus coastal habitats including saltmarshes and seagrass beds. The reports identify bottom trawling and offshore energy installation as the biggest potential threats to blue carbon stores.

The Wildlife Trusts, WWF and RSPB are calling on governments across the UK to strengthen protections for the most valuable and vulnerable blue carbon stores.

Find out more at wtru.st/blue-carbon-report



Sir David Attenborough celebrates 60 years with The Wildlife Trusts

Sir David Attenborough has been awarded the Rothschild medal in recognition of the extraordinary leadership, inspiration and indefatigable support he has given to The Wildlife Trusts federation of charities over the past 60 years.

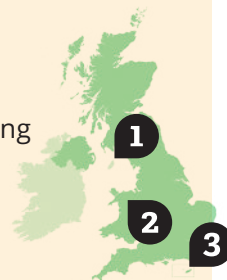
Charles Rothschild founded the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves which would later become The Wildlife Trusts. He was ahead of his time in recognising the need to protect natural habitats and the wildlife that lived there. His

daughter, Miriam, was a visionary scientist who dedicated her life to the natural world.

Sir David Attenborough credits Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust's Tilton Cutting Nature Reserve with giving him his love of the natural world – he would explore it and search for fossils there as a young boy. Since then, Sir David has championed the work of the Wildlife Trusts across the UK for six decades.

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



1 Children who changed the world

Manx Wildlife Trust and theatre company, Hello Little People, have launched an audio-immersive wildlife training academy for kids, Let's Get Wild! Wearing silent disco style headphones, 5–9 year-olds move, shake and dance through an action-packed adventure to complete challenges and help save wildlife in the Isle of Man. wtru.st/LetsGetWild

2 Garden escapers game

North Wales Wildlife Trust is tackling invasive plant species with an innovative new mobile game. Players complete 'missions' on the Crowdsora mobile game by locating and recording the garden escapees, along pavements in urban areas or in nature reserves. Players are paid £1 for each new observation of target plants. wtru.st/GardenEscapers



3 Pink Sea Fans

Off the Alderney coast, citizen scientists scuba-dive and snorkel for small tissue samples of the pink, warty looking soft corals of pink sea fans. Research by Alderney Wildlife Trust, University of Exeter and Jersey Marine Conservation is assessing their genetic connectivity across the rocky reefs of the Channel Islands. wtru.st/PinkSeaFans



Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership: A Critical Time for Change and Catalysing Action

Chloë Edwards, our Director of Nature Recovery shares details of a new county-wide partnership and her hopes for what that can collectively deliver for our local landscapes and wildlife.



Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership formed in the autumn of 2023, as a new vehicle for driving forward the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the county. The inaugural meeting of the Partnership took

place as the air was becoming crisper, leaves were beginning to fall, and darker evenings were approaching. A time of change. Even though our meeting was set against a backdrop of successive State of Nature reports reaffirming that

nature is in freefall and despite all our past efforts, we continue to be known as one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world – it was difficult not to feel hopeful as we all came together as a force for good.

The Hertfordshire LNRS is one of 48 being developed across England at the moment and each of these will support and coordinate efforts to restore and enhance at the local level and collectively form a Nature Recovery Network spanning the entire country. The process in our county is being led by Hertfordshire County Council, who are the Responsible Authority appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

As many of you will be aware there have been various plans and strategies developed over the last couple of decades in our county with nature recovery at their heart – so what makes this one different?

Well, one of the big differences this time is that unlike many past plans and strategies, the LNRS is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021, meaning local authorities are legally obligated to create and implement them.

Another distinction is that within the development of the LNRS, there is huge emphasis on collaboration with local stakeholders, ensuring local knowledge and needs shape the strategy so that the tools that emerge on the other side of the process have been locally tailored. One of the core elements of the LNRS is also the creation of spatial mapping tools which will highlight areas that are crucial for wildlife, connecting existing habitats, and identify places where restoration efforts should be focussed to have the greatest impact. Stakeholder input is incredibly important here to ensure that the evolving plans are grounded in reality and could be delivered.

Unlike previous plans and strategies, the LNRS will also play a vital role in influencing local planning decisions, ensuring future developments meaningfully contribute to nature recovery. This is the first time that a nature-focussed strategy will be integrated with land-use planning

in this way, and we also now have a direct mechanism for achieving nature improvements through development through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

And honestly, this time it does feel different. Over the last year, within the Partnership we have collectively spent many hundreds of hours working to shape the initial draft mapping and prioritisation work for our habitats and species. The task is colossal, constantly balancing ambition with realism, but we are incredibly lucky in our county to have so many hugely knowledgeable people willing to share their time and expertise to input into the process. There is still a vast amount of work to do before March 2025, when the LNRS for Hertfordshire should be complete. That is when the role of the Partnership will move into a new phase, as we focus on leveraging funding and mobilising resources at scale to deliver nature's recovery in what will be the most critical five-year period to 2030 through which we have lived.

We know we need transformative action, more urgently than ever before. And if by spring next year, we're all on the same page then the Hertfordshire LNRS can be the catalyst for action that delivers bigger, better and more joined-up landscapes across our county, those that are brimming with a diversity and abundance of wildlife and resilient to a climate that is ever changing.



LNRS landholder event © Gascoyne Estates



FIND OUT MORE

Online

You can find out more about the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership and get updates on opportunities to help shape the LNRS here: bit.ly/3YfXNnd



Tim Hill, the Trust's Conservation Manager explains the significance of our area's chalk rivers, the importance of partnerships, and gives some great ideas for going wild this winter in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.



Rivers of Dreams

With 10% of the world's resource, Hertfordshire and Middlesex has a special responsibility for conserving chalk streams and the plants and animals which depend on them. Since 2012 we have been 'catchment hosts' for all the rivers within the Lea Catchment whereby we provide a single point of contact to facilitate their restoration and conservation. As well as coordinating a partnership of over 300 individuals, community groups and organisations, we also carry out practical improvements to the rivers. We are only able to do this by working in collaboration with and securing funding from those able to help improve our watercourses. This work is led by Sarah Perry, the Trust's River Catchment Coordinator.

Unfortunately, none of Hertfordshire's rivers can be described as being in good ecological health and we are working with partners to try to achieve the trinity of features needed to bring the rivers into good condition – good water quality, good flow and healthy habitats. In pursuit of improving habitats, earlier this year we applied successfully for £1.7 million from the Government's Species Survival Fund. Over two years, the funding will

enable further restoration of 11km of our chalk rivers, reconnect up to 49 hectares of floodplain and improve four hectares of wetland habitats across Hertfordshire. This project will benefit over 100 species, alongside a programme of Wilder Communities work in Hertford and Welwyn Garden City.

One of those species is our native Brown Trout, an iconic apex predator and a good indicator of a healthy riverine ecosystem. What fascinates me most about trout is their spawning behaviour, which usually starts in November. By this time of year, the female, or hen is gravid, being full of eggs. When she feels the time is right, she will seek out gravels in the river bed and create a nest for her eggs, known as a redd. Convulsing her body back and forth, she pushes the gravel out of the way to dig a shallow pit varying from the size of a beer mat to a tea plate. When she's happy with the redd she will release some of her eggs. The male fish, or cock will then release sperm over the eggs to fertilise them. After this the hen will then push gravels over the eggs, covering them loosely. Depending on the temperature of the water,



Brown Trout © Henrietta Buxton



River Mimram © Debbie Bigg

the eggs will hatch in 60-100 days. The hatchlings are known as alevins and they live amongst fine gravels, initially getting nourishment from the remains of their yolk sac. When this is gone, the fish are known as fry, just a few centimetres long and they feed on small insects. If you fancy trying to spot a trout or their redds, I suggest a visit to the River Mimram at Panshanger Park during December where the Trust cares for the River in partnership with the owners, Tarmac, Maydencroft and the Wild Trout Trust. If you have or can

borrow polarised sunglasses it's worth wearing them as they remove the glare from the water's surface enabling a better view of what lies beneath.

SPECIES SURVIVAL FUND



Funded by
UK Government

Heritage
Fund

Upcoming Events

Here's a taster of what's on offer this winter but do check our events pages to see what else is happening as we regularly update them.

November

17 November
Wildlife Watch,
Panshanger Park

December

8 December
Wildlife Watch,
Panshanger Park

10 December
Woodland Coppicing,
Old Park Wood, Harefield

Why not take part in 12 Days Wild?



Our festive nature challenge encourages you to do one wild thing a day from 25 December to 5 January, each year.

Learn more at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/12-days-wild-wildlife-trusts



FIND OUT MORE

Online

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



Scanning for Gold

Stocker's Lake © Lea Ellis

Stocker's Lake, near Rickmansworth was created by the removal of tens of thousands of tons of sand and gravel between the 1920s and 1940s, some of which was used to build the original Wembley Stadium. Since quarrying ended the lake and margins have rewilded naturally and have been colonised by a huge variety of plants, creating the wonderful home for wildlife you can see today.

Stocker's Lake is owned by Affinity Water and has been managed by the Trust as part of a project partnership with the company for a number of years, alongside great support from the

Friends of Stocker's Lake. It offers a peaceful habitat with a variety of food sources for ducks, including insects, seeds, plants, and fish. The lake also provides sanctuary for birds disturbed by recreational activities on other waters elsewhere in the Colne Valley. Below the surface, Stocker's Lake provides home to large numbers of many types of fish including Tench, Roach and Perch. Unwary fish provide meals for birds such as Kingfishers, Little Egrets and Great Crested Grebes. The largest heronry in Hertfordshire is found here with 28 nests in recent years, with birds occupying nests from January onwards.

During the winter thousands of birds fly to the Colne Valley to escape freezing conditions in their breeding grounds in northern Europe. In January, one of the birds worth searching for is the Goldeneye – a designer duck if ever there was one – at a distance the males look simply black and white but up close and, in the sunshine, the head feathering is an explosion of colour – jade green then deep purple depending on how the light catches the feathers – Versace has nothing that comes

close! Between the eye and bill males have a white patch – described as the 'kiss of the ice queen' – alluding to the snowy north from where the majority of these birds originate. The female is a more subdued mix of brown, grey and white. Both have a distinctive triangular head shape and bright yellow or 'golden' eyes.

Stocker's Lake is an important feeding place for Goldeneye – up to 29 have been recorded here in recent winters. They are diving ducks, searching below water for invertebrates and at their most active will spend more time underwater than on the surface. More challenging still is that they often resurface a long way from where they dived! My best advice is to pick a vantage point overlooking the central part of the lake with the sun behind you – one of the hides or 'leaning rails' would be ideal. It's then a case of slowly 'scanning for gold' – panning with binoculars or telescope across the water. More numerous Tufted Ducks can look like male Goldeneye at a distance but the identification clincher is the 'ice queen's kiss' which stands out, even from far off.



Experience winter in your local woodland

See this:

On sunny days in late winter look out for bumble bees sauntering through glades in search of nectar from early flowers.

Smell this:

Squidge through the mud in your wellies and take in that lovely earthy, woody scent.

Hear this:

Sit quietly, close your eyes and listen to the calls and winter songs of the woodland birds.

Feel this:

Find Hertfordshire's two most characteristic trees, Oak and Hornbeam, and give them a big hug. Feel the differences in their bark. Old Oaks have deeply fissured bark, providing homes to all sorts of insects, and Hornbeams have a much finer texture.



Five ways to experience and enjoy winter

1. Pore over a pond

Even in the depths of winter, life lurks in the depths of ponds. One of the best ways to experience what's going on is to get out at night and shine a torch into the water. With patience you should be able to see the nymphs of dragonflies moving, looking like creatures from science fiction films, in search of prey. I'm always glad not to be a small pond-living animal when I see them!

2. 'Abbey New Year!'

In January we should expect to see the pair of Peregrine Falcons back in residence at St Albans Cathedral (the Abbey) and it's a good time to visit as they begin a new cycle of breeding, hopefully for the fourth year in a row. Take a pair of binoculars if you have some and stand on the south side of the Abbey, looking up at the main tower. The birds often spend long periods perched on ledges digesting their most recent meal. If you're lucky they may be displaying and calling as they fly – a loud and distinctive “keck, keck, keck”.



3. Help nature thrive in 2025!

As I always say at this time of year, do just five things to help turn around the nature crisis. If you have your own garden, consider all or any of the following ideas:

- Plant a tree – choose a native species such as Rowan and both flowers and fruit will provide food for local insects and birds.
- Create a pond – no matter what size or shape, wetlands will help nature with the added bonus that you get to watch frogs, newts and dragonflies in due course.
- Install and keep dead wood in your garden, ideally some of it buried – many insect larvae live in and eat rotting wood, including the spectacular stag beetle.
- Make a home for solitary bees by drilling holes in a lump of wood – use an 8mm drill bit and go 10cm deep.
- Diversify your garden to ensure that you have flowers throughout the year – there are insects in need of pollen and nectar in every month.

4. The harbinger of spring

As the days lengthen one of my favourite nature sounds fills the air, the flutery song of the Mistle Thrush. This is the largest of our thrushes and they set about establishing territories, perching in the top most branches of tall trees. To me they are shouting, “Spring is here, the season of singing is upon us, rejoice, rejoice!”

5. Gnats the way to do it

At sunset on sunny winter days have you ever spotted clouds of bouncing tiny insects with long drooping legs? If you're walking sometimes the cloud of insects will follow you along. These are Winter Gnats, a species of the crane fly family and no need to worry, they don't bite as they feed on nectar. Their larvae live in rotting vegetation. The 'clouds' are gatherings of male Gnats, as they try to make themselves obvious to females, which are less numerous, in an attempt to find a mate and breed.



Mistle Thrush © Tim Hill

Restoring the Majesty of the Meads

The Trust's Wilder Communities Officer, Chloé Valerie Harmsworth reflects on how partnership projects have improved biodiversity at King's Meads Nature Reserve and the local community's engagement with the site.



The meadows between Hertford and Ware, known as King's Meads, are one of the largest floodplain grasslands in Hertfordshire, and have been in use for over a thousand years. The name of the area comes from the 12th century *'Kynghesmad'*, with the word 'mead' being the original word for meadow.

In 2019, the Trust was granted financial support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, as well as from the Thames Water's Community Investment Fund and the Environment Agency, to carry out a project called *Restoring the Majesty of the Meads*, with the aim of restoring the biodiversity of King's Meads and simultaneously engaging the local community to support wildlife on their doorstep. The Trust has also worked with GlaxoSmithKline (who kindly donated land to contribute to the project) and with other landowners to restore this 96-hectare site.

Conservation work

The project has benefited from over 2,000 hours of volunteer input, with volunteers removing scrub, clearing paths, cutting meadows, coppicing

trees, installing signage and benches, and more besides.

Contractors have carried out hay cutting to keep the meadows open, and to prevent more dominant species from taking over (which would reduce botanical diversity). Two ditches on Lady's Mead have been cleared of tree cover to allow light to reach the ground and water, to encourage marginal vegetation growth that provides the ideal habitat for Water Voles and other small mammals, and is beneficial to aquatic invertebrates too.

Volunteers monitor the wildlife each week between April and September, and send butterfly records to Butterfly Conservation to contribute to the national picture of butterfly trends. Water Vole surveys are carried out twice a year, and have shown fairly steady numbers of the endangered mammal.

Wildlife

This work means that King's Meads is now a rich mosaic of habitats (grasslands and wetlands) and a haven for wildlife. As Reserves Officer





DID YOU KNOW?

In 2022 the Trust commissioned graffiti artist Mark Tanti to paint eight murals onto the pillars of the A10 viaduct, kindly supported by funding from Arts Council England. The creatures depicted include the Water Vole, Great Crested Newt, Kingfisher, and Comma butterfly. Visit the site to see these artworks for yourselves!



© Natasha Aidinyantz

Kathryn Dunnett explains, "As well as the species already mentioned, over 18 species of dragonflies and damselflies can be found there and 119 bird species have been recorded. There are 265 species of wildflower, including carpets of Knapweed, Bird's-foot-trefoil and Salad Burnet on Chadwell bank, a rare chalk grassland, in the summer."



Common Knapweed © Shirley Freeman

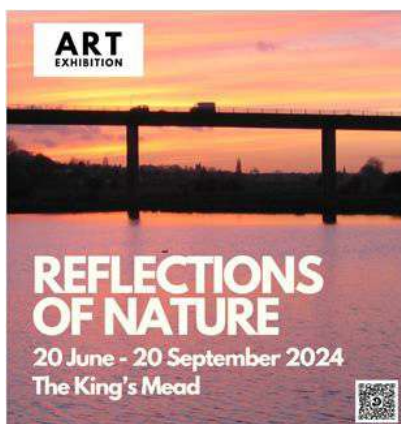
People

A programme of informative guided walks, including dawn chorus walks, bat walks, waterfowl walks, dragonfly walks and a chalk grassland plants walk have taken place, and signage has been installed to help people identify birds and dragonflies themselves. Two waymarked trails have been put in place to give specific routes for visitors to enjoy and information boards to help visitors find their way and discover more about the wildlife of King's Meads are now on site.

From 2022 to 2024, our Engagement Manager, Lea Ellis led nature connection and wellbeing walks with groups such as Always Bee You, and worked in partnership with Hertford Regional College to take art students

around the reserve to sketch and be inspired by the area (resulting in three art exhibitions). From July to the end of October 2024, Chloé Valerie Harmsworth continued this work with the college and other community groups.

Lea summarises, "We've met some wonderful people on this journey and have been inspired by seeing what effect King's Meads has had on all of those who have been involved in the project. It is hoped that the activities associated with the nature reserve will continue independently within the community long after the Trust's project has finished. For example, we eagerly await a King's Meads-based children's book created by the college's Animation students!"



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find visiting information for King's Meads and more at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/kings-meads](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/kings-meads)





Putting people at the heart of river recovery

Nicola Thompson, the Trust's Rivers Officer, tells us how citizen science and a collaborative approach is helping us get to the root of the issues facing our rivers.

In Hertfordshire we have the most special of rivers – chalk streams. In their best condition these rivers provide plentiful clean, clear and nutrient-rich waters - the perfect conditions for a plethora of wildlife to thrive. From Water Voles and Kingfishers to Freshwater Trout and Water Crowfoot down to the tiniest creatures hiding amongst the stony riverbed, all require clean and abundant water together

with suitable, connected habitat. Unfortunately, these ideal conditions are not to be found in many places. In fact, less than a quarter of the UK's chalk rivers are classed as being in good condition and none of these are within Hertfordshire.

We are doing something about this. The Trust is one of nine groups taking part in a larger pilot project covering England and Wales named CaSTCo or Catchment Systems Thinking Co-operative, and I am co-ordinating the project for our area on the River Beane, working to enable people to become more connected to their local river through citizen science,

whilst also feeding back learnings to the wider project. Through the scheme trained citizen scientists are getting involved in monitoring our rivers to help uncover sources of the problems. Our group is using a range of methods including monitoring water chemistry, sediment levels, and bankside surveys recording pipes and overland flow (such as from road runoff), visual pollution and problem areas, such as bankside erosion.

Over the last year, 20 citizen scientists have been monitoring the River Beane. Working in partnership with the Environment Agency and Affinity Water, we are hoping to combine



Nicola Thompson with testing kit

their traditional data with all the information gathered by the citizen scientists, to help understand the main pressures on the River Beane. This will inform actions that can be taken to improve the river and its environment. Jo McCaffrey, one of the citizen scientists monitoring the River Beane, says "Monitoring is so important for the health of the river, we can identify any problems and hopefully find solutions".

This project relies on collaboration between multiple organisations including the River Beane Restoration Association, who are integral to the project with their local knowledge and enthusiasm. The information collected by volunteers is essential in filling in the gaps of data we have.

It's clear that the contribution citizen scientists are making does not only help with positive change for the environment but also a recent survey has showed that being part of this project has benefitted the volunteers

too. Among the group asked, there was an increase in the volunteers' self-esteem, and they cited learning new skills, being outside more, feeling like they were making a difference and improved mental health as benefits of participation.

This work doesn't stop at the River Beane. Keen to share the opportunity and learning, we have also started to involve additional volunteer groups across the river network and have trained a further 10 volunteers on other tributaries of the River Lea, including the River Rib, Upper Lea and River Stort. Mary Brown, a citizen scientist who is involved in many monitoring methods on the River Rib, stated "All these small steps help to create change".

Trained citizen scientists are essential, without them volunteering their time to help survey we would not be able to cover such ground and find the issues as fast. With funds tight across the environment sector, the

involvement of many hands quite literally is having a greater impact. Through shared expertise and local knowledge, combined with the time and effort of the citizen scientists, positive change to our precious chalk streams will happen sooner.

The National CaSTCo project is drawing together learnings from across all the pilot projects to create a roadmap for improving rivers across the UK.

Thank you to everyone who is helping with this project.



DID YOU KNOW?

Monitoring riverfly (macroinvertebrates) can tell us if there has been a pollution incident!



FIND OUT MORE

Online

See how you can get involved at therivertrust.org/our-work/our-projects/castco-catchment-systems-thinking-cooperative

Discover more about our work on this citizen science project at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/castco-project

Read more about our commitment to protecting and restoring chalk rivers, the urgent actions needed to preserve these globally rare habitats and the wildlife they support at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/our-position-chalk-rivers



River Beane volunteer group

Business Backing for Nature

There are many ways that local businesses can support the work of the Trust and help to drive nature's recovery. Emma Norrington, our Director of Development, highlights some examples of this and we hear from companies making their own contributions.



Business Membership

The Trust offers four levels of Business Membership to choose from – Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Annual fees start at £750 + VAT. Each level has its own package of benefits including discounts on staff engagement activities, introductory offers for employee memberships, and shared communications with our supporters.

Find out more and join our growing network of Business Members here: hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/corporate-support#membership

Welcome to our newest Members!

Two local businesses have recently started new Memberships with the Trust:

Burgundy Developments Ltd, a local planning consultancy based in Redbourn, has joined as a Silver Business Member.

Jump Design and Print, based in Hoddesdon, has joined as a Gold Business Member, building on individual staff involvement in our nature reserve volunteer activities.

Copper in the Clouds

THE DISTILLERY AT DOWSETTS FARM

Donations

1% for the Planet is a global initiative which commits businesses signed up to pledge to donate 1% of their annual turnover to an environmental cause. The Trust is one of the scheme's listed Environmental Partners, enabling Copper in the Clouds, a gin and rum distillery based in Ware, to donate over £3,800 to the Trust this year. A wonderful contribution to our work!

"1% FTP is a global initiative but we wanted our contribution to benefit our local habitats as much as possible. Our business relies heavily on our local ecosystems for the growth of our ingredients, so our partnership with HMWT is a natural fit."

James Grant, Director

You can find out more about *1% for the Planet* here - onepercentfortheplanet.org

Land Management Partnerships

Affinity Water is working in partnership with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust on a long-term project to conserve and enhance three local sites for wildlife – Stocker's Lake, Springwell Reedbed and Hilfield Reservoir. Through the partnership the Trust provides site management and wildlife monitoring expertise and delivers joint educational and community events to raise awareness of environmental issues, particularly around habitats and biodiversity and the link to water saving. The company has also held a Business Membership with the Trust since 2009.

You can read more about what to see at Stocker's Lake this winter on page 12.



Affinity Water



Do you want to promote your business and support wildlife?

You can do that right here!

We welcome advertising enquiries for *Wildlife Matters*, simply email media@hmwt.org to start a conversation.



Sales Partnerships

Part of the Aldenham Estate in Elstree, Home Farm Glamping has been supporting the Trust with annual donations from their booking sales since 2020. Each Glamping booking includes a £3 donation to the Trust, with over £11,700 raised for the Trust in this way over the last four years. The Trust also provides nature resources and activities for guests and visitors to the site. Alongside our partnership with Home Farm Glamping, the Trust is supporting the Aldenham Estate management team to develop and deliver a Conservation Management Plan – making more space for nature alongside the day-to-day work of the estate.

"Like us, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust believe that wildlife should be able to thrive alongside our everyday lives. We believe our partnership will create a joint effort to protect the precious land our family have lived on for over 400 years and encourage our guests to get the very best out of their stay."

Jess Allen-Back, Home Farm Glamping

Activities for Staff

We offer a range of activities for business staff teams – practical volunteer days, lunch time walks, staff talks and training workshops. These all give colleagues the opportunity to learn something new, get out into nature and make a difference in their community. You can find out more about what's on offer and pricing here hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/corporate-support

You can see what else our business supporters have been up to recently on pages 24-25.



If you'd like to find out more about how your business or employer could support the Trust then please get in touch with us by email - partnerships@hmwt.org – to arrange a chat through what might work best for you and your team.

Weird and Wonderful Wildlife

Spiders and their common thread

Ian Carle, our Nature Reserves Manager explores the multiple different uses of silk within the spider community. All spiders produce silk, but if you thought they just used it to catch their prey read on...



Nursery Web Spider © Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography



The rather elaborate egg-sac produced by a pirate spider (*Ero cambridgei/furcate*) © Ian Carle

Wrapping

All species of spider wrap their eggs in silk to protect them from drying out and extreme heat or cold. Wrapping them in silk provides a defence against parasites and predators. Some species such as the Nursery Web Spider (*Pisaura mirabilis*) construct an egg-sac that enables the female to provide the ultimate protection for her eggs – the egg-sac she produces is robust enough for her to carry it around with her. She will then construct a nursery web, hang up her egg-sac and stand guard until the eggs hatch and the youngsters disperse! The Nursery Web Spider is common in areas of shorter vegetation in our area.

Sputnik Spider (*Paidiscura pallens*)

– tiny spider identifiable from the distinctive egg-sac. Found on the underside of the leaves of broadleaved trees, with a preference for Oak. Old Park Wood Nature Reserve is a good place to spot them.



Sputnik Spider *Paidiscura pallens* © Ian Carle

Shelter

Not all species of spider like to carry their egg-sacs around with them, some will use silk to construct a shelter where they can guard their egg-sacs. Species such as the Furrow Spider (*Larinioides cornutus*), found in wetland sites such as our Frogmore Meadows or Blagrove Common Nature Reserves, use silk to join the tops of grass stems together to form a refuge. Ground dwelling species will make a silken cell under stones, and species found in low growing vegetation will fashion shelters out of rolled leaves.



Furrow Spider *Larinioides cornutus* © Chris Lawrence

Courtship

Silk has a role to play in the courtship behaviour of all spiders. Non-web building species such as jumping spiders lay down strands of silk as they move around. These strands contain chemical clues about the spider that made them – enabling males to find females and possibly even whether the female has mated or not.

The Common Zebra Spider (*Salticus scenicus*) is found in gardens so there's a good chance you could get to see one!

Ballooning and Rigging

As an eight-legged creature how do you colonise new areas? Well, the obvious answer with all those legs is to walk and this is the method used by some species, however other spiders have taken dispersal to a whole different level using silk! Two techniques are involved – ballooning and rigging. Ballooning involves the spider or *spiderling* – the young of a spider – moving to the highest available point, such as the top of a flower, lifting its abdomen in the air and allowing the breeze to draw a strand of silk from its *spinnerets* – silk-spinning organs. When the strand of silk is

long enough the lift provided by the breeze is enough to pull the spider up into the air. If you're out for a morning walk you might be lucky enough to see grassland covered in sheets of silk – this phenomenon happens when thousands of tiny spiderlings balloon at the same time. Species such as the money spider (*Erigone atra*) use the ballooning technique – they're the tiny shiny black spiders that appear out of nowhere on our clothes!

Rigging is when the silk strand catches on to adjacent vegetation, the spider uses the taut strand of silk as a bridge – next time you watch a Spiderman movie you'll be

seeing him move from skyscraper to skyscraper using a highly modified version of rigging! In the real world, this technique is used by spiders such as the Daddy Long-legs Spider (*Pholcus phalangioides*) often found in our homes.

Thank you to David Carr, Herts Spider Recorder, Herts Natural History Society for the advice and expertise which he has added to this article.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

For more weird and wonderful facts about spiders, search the Wildlife Explorer pages of our website at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer)

Communities making a positive impact

As our Nextdoor Nature Project celebrates its impact over the last two years, Lea Ellis, the Trust's Engagement Manager looks at how we can build on its success and get everyone involved in being a part of Team Wilder - winning for wildlife!

Many of our projects are subject to short term funding, but Nextdoor Nature was always designed to be a little different in terms of our approach and the need for long-term sustainability. The scheme has been supported in its early development stage by Dacorum Borough Council (Climate Action Network), Hertfordshire Community Foundation, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Postcode Planet Trust. Esme Staunton-Howe and I trained as community organisers - the ethos being that we work **with** communities rather than **for** them. If a project isn't what the community actually wants, then once the support has gone the interest will too. It was essential then that we started by asking local people what they'd like to see happen. We had to keep an open mind and use problem solving skills as well as gathering local knowledge to be able to signpost people to link up with others and get help.

Saving our environment was not always the most important thing on people's minds for a variety of reasons. We understand that for some people their worries were more immediate - paying an ever-rising energy bill, for example. We tried to get the message across that looking after the environment was a part of the whole mass of wheels and cogs that is the machine of life. Costs are continually going up and working together is essential. Moreover, being outdoors improves our mental health, so we may go for a walk worrying about the price of fuel but after a while the beauty, tranquillity and pleasure that comes from being watched by a Robin or the rain falling onto sunset-coloured autumn leaves reminds us, just for a moment, we are part of something much bigger that we can each have a positive impact on.





Team Wilder in the Community

The St. Mary's Community Garden Project in Northchurch still has a team of volunteers working hard to make their vision real; our Guerrilla Gardeners in Apsley continue to find new areas of waste ground to rewild. In St Albans, local community action is going from strength to strength - check out newly formed Community Interest Company, The Green House - a new eco hub for the city, Harpenden and surrounding villages.

The Green Heart of Watford is a group that worked with Esme to restore nature to the land around St. Mary's Church. They have now partnered with Watford Borough Council and meet regularly to keep up the momentum.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Learn more about St Mary's Community Garden Project at stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk/single-post/blooming-together-plans-for-a-community-garden-in-northchurch

Discover more about The Green House at thegreenhousestalbens.org

See more about the Green Heart of Watford initiative at stmaryswatford.org/new-page-32

One Quick Win for you!

Recycle, upcycle - and make do and mend! Production of household waste needs to decrease by 33% by 2037 to reach recommended emissions targets. Repair Cafes are wonderful community-run projects that have volunteers with specific skills who can help restore damaged items. Brand new products these days are not designed to last, but many can be fixed. Perhaps you have an old beloved item that has worked for years but now needs a little TLC? Or maybe you can help out and would like to volunteer for one of these amazing projects!



FIND OUT MORE

Online

In Hertfordshire we have 10 Repair Cafes, find out where they are here: hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/recycling-and-waste/wasteaware-campaigns/repair-cafes.aspx *Source Nextdoor Nature Hub

Across the UK, Nextdoor Nature has worked with 1600 communities, and though that funding has stopped, many Trusts like us have found other sources in order to keep the momentum. In October, Kate Sheard joined the team as Wilder Communities Officer for a new programme of work across Hertford and Welwyn Garden City thanks to funding from the Government's Species Survival Fund and GSK via the Projects for Nature scheme.

We are also excited to confirm funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and Swire Charitable Trust for a new three-year programme of Wilder Communities in Watford which we hope to get started on soon.

If you have an idea, you don't need to reinvent the wheel. Talk to neighbours, friends, colleagues, council representatives; pool ideas, knowledge, skills, vision and a passion to do something positive that will benefit us all.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

You can also check out our Wilder Communities website pages for inspiration and advice at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-communities

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

Our Wild Supporters

Your membership matters

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



Brown Hare © Jamie Hall



Art for Nature

A generous member of the Trust, who wishes to remain anonymous, has raised a fantastic £700 by selling and donating the proceeds of their prized turtle sculpture by the celebrated British sculptor, Laurence Broderick (1935-2024).

Broderick is best known for his work 'The Bull', which was erected in 2003 at the Bull Ring shopping centre in Birmingham. Much of Broderick's work was inspired by nature, particularly the wildlife on the Isle of Sky, where he saw his first wild Otter and had a second home. He also served as joint president of the International Otter Survival Fund. We are deeply grateful for this kind donation.

♥ A huge heartfelt thank you

This summer, we launched our Wildlife in Crisis appeal. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, we are over halfway towards achieving our £280,000 appeal goal.

We also invited you, our members, to consider increasing your regular gift. We were blown away by the response and want to thank all our members for your incredible ongoing support; together, we can continue to work to support nature's recovery.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

You can find out more about the appeal by visiting hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/crisis



Local artist, Sharon Martin generously pledged to donate 20% of the proceeds from her sales at a non-profit community exhibition at Curwen's Solicitors Art Gallery in Royston (she is not affiliated with or employed by Curwen's Solicitors).

Sharon has lived in Royston for over 30 years and is a self-taught artist, using pastel, colour pencils and charcoal. She is a passionate advocate for wildlife, the subject of most of her work.

Thank you, Sharon, for your support and dedication to nature through your art.



£ The Chair of Chorleywood's Charity of the Year

A huge thank you to the Chair of Chorleywood Parish Council, Debbie Rosario, for selecting us as her chosen charity for the upcoming council year. Fundraising kicked off with a Village Day Event on Saturday 20 July, featuring fun activities such as the 'Guess the weight of the cake' competition. Thank you for your support!



FIND OUT MORE

Online

If you have an idea for fundraising for the Trust, please do get in touch with us at fundraising@hmt.org

In remembrance

We would like to thank Avril Rosemary Allen for kindly leaving a gift to the Trust in her will and to the family of Christopher Taylor-Young who donated to the Trust in his memory. We are extremely grateful to them for supporting the Trust in this special way. Our condolences go to their friends and family.



Business Supporters go wild!



The Herts Go Green and Grow environmental initiative was launched in 2022 by Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with local businesses to support their transition to Net Zero. Members took part in our 30 Days Wild initiative, which encourages participants to do 'wild' things during June.

Graham Pitts from KGK Genix headed out to the Snowdonia National Park, where he and his family climbed Snowdon. Closer to home, team members clocked up their steps on local nature, making the most of Hertfordshire's riversides, woods and open green spaces, and Kevin Ward from JPA Workspaces used his creative skills to build six bird boxes using recycled pallets.

Some of the team from Insight MCL went kayaking, using the 30 Days Wild butterfly list to spot as many species as possible along the riverbank.

By taking small, mindful actions like these, we can all contribute to nature's recovery and make a lasting impact on the environment.



Business Members Snap to it!

Recruitment agency MPI Limited are Business Members of the Trust and raised a fantastic £160 for the Trust through their Wildlife Photo Competition with this stunning winning photo by Ami Randall of Lizard Point in Cornwall. Thank you for choosing us – and well done to all your staff who entered the competition and showcased their wonderful photographs with the theme of water.

"We chose to take part in "30 Days Wild" for several compelling reasons, but ultimately we felt this campaign really reflects our belief in the power of collective action to make a positive impact on the environment and inspire individuals to become advocates for wildlife conservation. We look forward to more opportunities to promote these values with the trust in the future in other innovative ways."

Lydia Partington, MPI Limited



Do

If you would like to find out more about how your business can support the Trust, please visit hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/corporate-support

Read more about the different options businesses have to support the Trust and the heart-warming stories of those already contributing in this way on pages 18-19.

Protecting our Enchanting Woodlands

Picture the scene, an ancient woodland, shaped by centuries and decades that have seen changes of use, from the collection of firewood to animal grazing to leisure, all the while providing a rich habitat for woodland wildlife dwellers.

This woodland which has existed since at least AD 1600 has a high-pitched soundtrack of Coal Tits, Great Tits and Blue Tits trilling in the trees, Jays bury their winter supplies, newts seek out its damper areas and hole up under fallen deadwood. Woodland butterflies – White Admiral, Brimstone and Comma are amongst those species seeking out sunny glades, whilst by night Badgers forage for food.

Under the woodland's canopy, Bluebell, Primrose, Wood Anemone, Creeping Buttercup and Early Purple Orchid promise a riot of colour. Meanwhile, lichen, mosses and fungi create a micro habitat of their own, splashing their colour onto both living and deadwood, providing shelter to a host of invertebrates. The earthy smell, quite unlike anywhere else, reminds you that you are standing in a place of history – one which has seen the soil enriched by centuries of autumnal falls - Oak, Wild Cherry, Hazel, Ash, Hornbeam, and Silver Birch amongst those adding to the rich compost beneath your feet.

Deadwood broken down by the many lifecycles of its saproxylic beetle inhabitants feeds the soil further – making it a fertile source for new growth. Fresh rainfall adds to the

aroma, depositing pearls of liquid on leaves, which, when caught by rays of sunshine, glint like crystals. In your mind's eye, capture the feeling of stillness, peace and contentment that exists here, and think of those who have sensed this before...

At the Trust, with your support, and that of our volunteers and funders, we are working in partnership to protect our ancient woodlands for the wildlife that calls this irreplaceable habitat home and to ensure future generations are as enchanted by them as those who have gone before us. This is however no small challenge.

As the wildlife crisis has grown our costs have increased, from the cost of chainsaw training to our tree safety work. This has been exacerbated by managing Ash dieback – a disease which is sadly due to kill up to 90% of the UK's Ash population. As landowners and leaseholders, we have a duty to protect the safety of the public on our sites and are having to cut down terminally diseased trees close to roads and footpaths, which have or will become unsafe. Administratively and physically, this is a huge burden and together with the rising costs of training our team, our resources are stretched to the limit.

We know how to protect this precious habitat but the next chapter in its history will tell us if we've been able to afford to do that...



FIND OUT MORE

Online

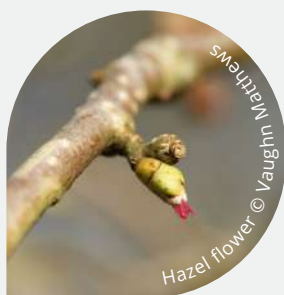
We are currently fundraising to cover the volume and range of work needed across the Trust, including our ancient woodland reserves. Further information on our appeal can be viewed at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/crisis



Part of the work we are carrying out to protect our ancient woodlands is kindly being supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Read more at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/ancient-woodlands-hertfordshire-and-middlesex-boosted-new-project

Winter Woodland Highlights

Iain Ward, the Trusts' Wilder Woodlands Officer shares his top picks of woodland species to spot in winter:



Hazel flower © Vaughn Matthews

- Hazel comes in to flower as early as January and the female flowers can be easily overlooked as they're so small. They resemble a leaf bud but have tiny pink styles protruding from the tip. Unlike most trees, these are often at eye level too.



Velvet Shank © Ben Cook

- Velvet Shank is a little orange capped fungus that continues to fruit through the winter on rotting stumps and dead standing trees.



Wood Anemone © Charlotte Huxley

- Wood Anemone and Lesser Celandine are both early flowering wildflowers that are found in woodland as early as the end of February. Wood Anemone is an ancient woodland indicator.



Barbastelle Bat © Jai Sattik

- Barbastelle bats are relatively tolerant of cold, and roost in hollow tree trunks and behind flaking bark on dead trees. They often move between roosts during the winter and will even fly to forage during milder periods.



Redwing © Paul Thrush

- Fieldfares and Redwings are two winter visiting birds that are often seen together in large flocks, stripping Hawthorns of their berries.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Get to know more about the species mentioned at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer

Discover more about our ancient woodland sites at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves

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.

At a pivotal point in the nature crisis, we have launched an urgent Wildlife in Crisis appeal to raise £280,000 to invest in nature's future.



FIND OUT MORE

—
Online

hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/crisis

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