

Celebrating the wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex

wildlifematters

Winter 2023



**Herts &
Middlesex**
Wildlife Trust

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Welcome



As supporters of the Trust, I know you'll share my profound concerns for the future of wildlife. I'm writing this in the same week the latest national State of Nature report was published, which makes for very worrying reading, but also gives strong messages of hope.

The 2023 State of Nature report assessed the status of over 10,000 species. The figures are alarming – populations of 19% of these species have declined since 1970, and one in six are threatened with extinction. The messages of hope come from seeing habitats protected and in positive conservation management, alongside successful species recovery schemes.

Thanks to the support of our members, volunteers and funders, the Trust can turn that hope into reality. In the last year, this support enabled us to purchase - and give a safe future to - Archers Green Nature Reserve, which is home to flower rich meadows, the River Mimram and precious species - some of which you can read about on pages 8-9. Central to the future of wildlife is that people care, and our Nextdoor Nature projects are reaching out to communities to empower people to help wildlife on their patch.

Sadly, damage to our most precious sites for nature continue to be under threat. Hillingdon Council's proposed Watersports and Activity Centre at Broadwater Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest is progressing to the planning stage. We are very concerned that this development would see the destruction of the wildlife habitats, and would set a very dangerous precedent for the future of protected sites across the country. The State of Nature report underlines that only 7% of land in England has protected status; with so little protected and so many species reliant on these sites, we really cannot afford to lose more. We will share our response to the planning application, and I urge you to join us in standing up for this special site by reading more on page 9 and regularly checking our dedicated webpages for updates and to find out how you can help.

Seeing wildlife and wild places is uplifting and in Hertfordshire and Middlesex there are many very special places to visit and fascinating species to discover. At this time of year, looking for fungi in woodlands or watching a Blackbird strip the berries in my garden, inspires me about just how wonderful our natural world is, and gives me the hope and determination to do all I can for the future of wildlife.

As ever, thank you for your support.

Lesley

Lesley Davies
Chief Executive



Water Buffalo at Thorley Wash © Robert Phillips



Honey Bee © Lesley Fidell



Nathusius' Pipistrelle © Terry Whittaker 2020VISION

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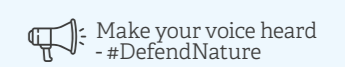
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Herts and Middlesex Wild News

State of Nature Report

At the end of September, leading wildlife organisations published a landmark **State of Nature 2023 report**. It shows that nature is continuing to decline at an alarming rate across the UK, which is already one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.

The State of Nature 2023 report shows:

- One in six species is now at risk of being lost from Great Britain
- The wildlife studied has, on average, declined by 19% since monitoring began in 1970
- Most important habitats are in poor condition, though restoration projects have clear benefits for nature, people and adapting to climate change

People's concern about nature loss, climate change and degraded wild places is a significant voting issue. The Wildlife Trusts are calling on politicians of all parties to commit to an ambitious programme of policies to support nature's recovery. You can read more about the political asks on the next spread.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Read the full *State of Nature Report 2023* at stateofnature.org.uk



How Conservation Projects Provide Hope...

Whilst the State of Nature Report is hugely concerning, conservation projects continue to give us hope for the future. Archers Green Nature Reserve, near Tewin, is one of the sites to benefit from The Wildlife Trust's new programme 'Transforming Nature's Recovery' which will accelerate UK nature recovery and help to reverse catastrophic declines in wildlife. £6 million from the Ecological Restoration Fund will support rewilding projects, the reintroduction of keystone species and better protections for marine and coastal habitats.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Read the full story here: bit.ly/3tWfWuZ

Project to make Scarce Tufted-sedge less scarce!

We are delighted to share news of a flagship project to save a critically endangered plant, Scarce Tufted-sedge *Carex cespitosa*, from extinction in the UK. Currently, Scarce Tufted-sedge is only found on one site in the whole of the UK, in Hertfordshire. The plant is growing on a privately-owned county Local Wildlife Site, and both the careful owners and the Trust realise we have a duty to ensure its survival. It's projects like this that are part of our responsibility to future generations, so that they will be able to experience the full breadth of UK biodiversity and continues our strategy to restore 30% of land for nature by 2030. The project is funded by Natural England's Species Recovery Programme.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/caring-for-carex



Scarce Tufted Sedge © Astrid Biddle



AGM

Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM at All Nations Christian College on the Easneye Estate, near Ware on 30 September. We were delighted to see so many of you, our members, face-to-face, to share our news and hear your views about the Trust and our work.



Inaugural National Moss Day

As part of its centenary year celebrations, the British Bryological Society launched the first National Moss Day. We were delighted to hold two introductory sessions to mosses and liverworts at Tewin Orchard Nature Reserve, near Welwyn, in collaboration with the Society.

Thanks to Richmond upon Thames' student, Libby Nelson, who provided the Trust with a wonderful animated short film about moss, which educates people about the beauty of mosses and liverworts that contribute to the biodiversity of habitats. This is a great asset for us to share with our supporters and we appreciate Libby's hard work and attention to detail in the making of it. Thanks too to Agneta Burton for providing Libby with feedback and guidance on the video's script.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Watch Libby's film about moss here bit.ly/496g9f9



Would you like to receive your Wildlife Matters magazine digitally?

We'd love to find out how many of our members would like to receive their copy of *Wildlife Matters* straight to their inbox rather than through the letter box. Please take our quick questionnaire via this link: hertswildlifetrust.formstack.com/forms/wildlifematters_survey_2023

Thank you - we really appreciate your feedback.



A wild day out!

Wildfest 2023 proved to be a super day out at Cassiobury Park in Watford, back in July. The event was organised by the Trust, with the support of the many local groups and organisations working for wildlife across the region and sponsored by Affinity Water. We saw the local community turn out in numbers to meet our team and other conservationists, explore the park for local wildlife and take part in the many family-themed activities on offer. We met and engaged with lots of new people and hopefully gave them an insight into how important it is to appreciate and protect our local wildlife.



Wildfest © Debbie Bigg



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Wildfest is just one of the ways our Wilder Communities Team is helping to put nature's recovery in the hands of communities. hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-communities

Hello and Goodbye

We bid farewell to Sally Clark, our former Head of Finance, who has taken early retirement and welcome Michael Wood, who has taken over the role. Planning & Biodiversity Manager, Matt Dodds has left the Trust after eight years' service. Simon Marsh has taken up the post of Planning & Policy Manager.

Nicola Thompson joined us as Rivers Officer (Citizen Science & Partnerships) and is leading our national pilot for citizen science on chalk rivers and supporting our work as Catchment Host of the River Lea Partnerships.

Reserves Officer, Bethany Palmer left us for a new adventure in the Yorkshire Dales. Replacing her, Matt Butters has moved up from his position of Assistant Reserves Officer.

Within Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC), many congratulations to Alex Waechter on the birth of her new arrival, Edward, and welcome to Chloé Harmsworth who has joined us as the Records Centre Business Manager, providing maternity cover. Vicki Loberman, has extended her role within the Trust's Fundraising Team to take on the role of Assistant Data Officer at HERC. Data Officer (Ancient Woodland and Habitats), Emily Baker has left to take up a new job at the National Biodiversity Network.

Fundraising Officer (Maternity Cover), David Felber left the Trust and Sarah Croft has returned from maternity leave.

People and Wildlife Officer (Wilder St Albans), Gina Burlinson has left the Trust at the end of a fixed term contract.

Congratulations to Database Co-ordinator, Alan Cotterell on the birth of his baby boy, Rowan.

We wish everyone well as they start their new roles with the Trust or move to pastures new.

UK NEWS

UK UPDATE

Nature for the people

River restoration should be high on the agenda, with pollution threatening wildlife like kingfishers



Kingfisher © Joshua Copping

The coming year will bring with it a general election, with the people of the UK given the opportunity to choose their representatives in government. One thing is clear: whichever party forms the UK Government, they must make it a priority to tackle the nature and climate crisis.

The Wildlife Trusts have created a set of asks detailing what we want to see – and what nature needs – from the UK Government. Our asks are broken down into five key sections, each with three simple steps outlining how it can be achieved. The Wildlife Trusts are calling for whomever makes the next UK Government to:

1 Bring back our lost wildlife

Nature is declining at a speed never previously seen and shows no signs of slowing. We need the Government to reverse this trend and put nature into recovery. They must ensure that at least 30% of land and sea is protected for it by 2030. They must also stop the damage to our seas through sewage discharges and river pollution, as well as safeguarding Marine Protected Areas from development and destructive fishing methods. Finally, we want to see wild Beavers in every major river catchment in England, Scotland and Wales – restoring wetlands and making space for nature.

2 End river pollution

Many of the UK's rivers are polluted beyond legal limits, and less than half are in good condition ecologically – but the Government can take action. Firstly, they must ensure that environmental watchdogs have the powers and resources to enforce the law, with regular monitoring and commensurate penalties for parties who knowingly break it. They must halve nutrient pollution from sewage, wastewater and agriculture by 2030. Finally, we need stronger protection for chalk streams, one of the world's rarest habitats.

3 Fund wildlife-friendly farming

Farming is one of the main causes of wildlife declines, but it doesn't have to be. Government can support farmers to grow in harmony with nature and help bring wildlife back. They need to double the budget for wildlife-friendly farming, halve the use of pesticides and protect farming against climate change. The extreme heat and droughts in 2017 and 2022 provided a taste of the reality to come; farmers need more support to adapt to climate change.

4 Green our communities

Too many of us live in polluted, nature-deprived neighbourhoods. These poor quality living conditions are damaging people's health and cutting lives short. We need a Natural Health Fund to reduce the strain on the NHS and public services. We need a legally mandated right to a clean and healthy environment, protecting nature and the health and wellbeing of us all. And we need all children to be given the opportunity to learn outdoors.

5 Tackle the climate emergency

Climate change is driving nature's decline, whilst the loss of wildlife and wild places leaves us ill-equipped to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to change. It's a vicious cycle that demands immediate action. We need the UK Government to help nature and people adapt to climate change, protect the blue carbon in our marine environments, and make our homes more energy efficient.

UK UPDATE

In hot water

Summer saw global sea surface temperatures reach an all time high, with worrying implications for the world's wildlife. In August, the Copernicus climate modelling service reported that the global average daily sea surface temperatures hit 20.96°C, breaking the record of 20.95°C set in 2016.

The changes to sea temperature we are already seeing as the climate warms are particularly dangerous to unique and threatened ecosystems, such as warm water coral reefs. This risk was demonstrated this summer in Florida, where corals were not only bleaching at alarming rates, but dying very quickly. The UK's seas will not be immune to the changes we are seeing now. June saw an extreme marine heatwave develop off our coasts. Sustained high temperatures can lead to the death and changes in behaviour of fish and other marine wildlife, with significant impacts on food webs.

Alongside the record sea surface and land surface temperatures, the last year has also seen unprecedented changes in the extent of Antarctic sea ice and wildfires. Other extreme weather was also widespread, with many catastrophic heatwaves and flooding incidents around the world.

As the impacts of a warming planet become more obvious, the Wildlife Trusts are urging this UK Government to accelerate action on climate change. It's vital that we reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, but also that we do more to adapt to the changes we are already seeing. The impacts of climate change will keep getting worse until the world hits net zero greenhouse gas emissions. Global emissions are still increasing, and haven't started to drop yet.

Find out more about combatting the climate and nature emergency at wildlifetrusts.org/emergency



Grey Partridges are just one of the threatened species that will benefit

New fund for nature's recovery

The Wildlife Trusts are ramping up plans to combat the nature crisis thanks to a £6 million investment from the Ecological Restoration Fund. The money will support rewilding projects, the reintroduction of keystone species and better protections for marine and coastal habitats.

The programme will work towards creating bigger and more connected wild areas for nature's

recovery, which are essential to protecting 30% of land and sea by 2030. Projects that will benefit include a coast-to-coast nature recovery programme along Hadrian's Wall, peatland restoration in Northern Ireland, and wetland restoration across the River Severn catchment.

Find out more at wildlifetrusts.org/6-million-ERF

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



1 A model approach

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside is growing a sustainable alternative to goose-feather down. BioPuff®, which can replace feathers in padded jackets, is made from the fluffy seedheads of bulrushes. The Trust plans to re-wet agricultural peatland to grow the bulrushes, protecting the carbon in the peat and reducing emissions. wtru.st/bulrush-clothing



2 The buffalo-down

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has introduced a herd of Water Buffalo to improve rare fen habitat at Thorley Wash Nature Reserve. These hardy animals will graze the ditches and marshy areas that cows prefer to avoid, preventing the need for heavy machinery to clear scrub and improve the site for wildlife such as Water Voles. wtru.st/herts-buffalo

3 Seeing reddish

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has rediscovered one of the UK's rarest moths. The Reddish Buff is only found on one site in the country, a Wildlife Trust nature reserve on the Isle of Wight, but had not been recorded since 2019. This year, the Trust's annual survey revealed two adult moths. wtru.st/seeing-reddish

Hope for wildlife at Archers Green

The State of Nature Report makes for terrifying reading, but beyond the gloom of the headlines, there is hope. Conservation management is a key weapon to fight the climate and nature crisis and, with your help, we have just won a major battle in our £500,000 fundraising campaign to protect Archers Green and its wildlife. So, let us share with you just some of the beneficiaries who dwell in this wonderfully diverse nature reserve, with its range of different grassland, wetland habitats and a good-quality stretch of chalk river - the River Mimram.

Harebell

Archers Green is botanically rich, with more than 170 species of plants recorded on site to date. Included in this is the Harebell, which was identified as a Herts Species of Conservation Concern



Harebells © Tim Hill

by the Herts State of Nature Report based on rarity, decline or a special responsibility within Hertfordshire for their overall national status. Harebells flower from July to September - a delicate bell-shaped vision in blue, which provide a source of nectar for Bumblebees and Honeybees. The plants thrive on dry, undisturbed ground such as that found at Archers Green.

Riffle beetle *Riolus subviolaceus*

To date 40 beetle species have been recorded at Archers Green and amongst those are three which are deemed nationally scarce. One of this small number is a species of Riffle



Grey Wagtail © Paul Thrush

beetle *Riolus subviolaceus*, which can be found on moss-covered stones in calcareous streams with good water quality. Our records in Hertfordshire back this up, with data showing them scattered along better-quality chalk streams with gravelly beds. The most recent records for the county were reported from Archers Green and further upstream along the River Mimram.

Bullhead

The River Mimram supports a number of different fish species including Three-spined Sticklebacks, Minnows and Stone Loaches. The latter can be particularly sensitive to pollution, and its presence at Archers Green highlights the water quality of the River Mimram through this stretch.

Bullhead are a protected species, well recorded on the river, and by safeguarding the future of Archers Green, the Trust will help to keep stretches of suitable river habitat connected for them to thrive.

Grey Wagtail

When the headlines for nature can often be bleak, the plight of the Grey Wagtail is one that can be considered a better news story. Previously a red-listed species according to the UK Red List for Birds, the Grey Wagtail has recently been upgraded to the amber list (meaning its status is still unfavourable but improving). Fairly well recorded across Hertfordshire, they can be found at Archers Green

and along the river in the summer, where they feed and raise their young.

Water Vole

One of our most iconic river dwellers, the Water Vole is an endangered species and is protected on a national level. With a setting straight out of *Wind in the Willows*, protecting Archers Green ensures the continued connectivity of quality habitat for 'Ratty'. Water Voles are particularly well recorded along the River Mimram - they thrive in the well-vegetated banks along its slow-flowing watercourse.

We appreciate every single donation and action that has been made to

enable us to protect the precious habitats at Archers Green and its wildlife. Thank you.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more about UK Red List for birds at bto.org/our-science/publications/birds-conservation-concern

Check out some of the other species mentioned in this article at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer

We Must Protect Endangered Habitats

Threat to Broadwater Lake SSSI

As mentioned in our last issue of *Wildlife Matters*, Broadwater Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is under threat from development by Hillingdon Council. The 80-hectare lake represents 60% of the Mid Colne Valley SSSI and encompasses the Trust's Broadwater Lake Nature Reserve, which lies along the west of the site and includes Korda Lake, Long Pond and the River Colne. These SSSI wetlands support nationally significant populations of water birds, including Shoveler and Pochard.

Hillingdon Council are expected to imminently submit their planning application to develop a new Watersports and Activity Centre at this SSSI. This is a nationally important site for wildlife and the Council's plans set a dangerous precedent for potential development on protected sites, not just at Broadwater Lake SSSI but throughout the UK. We cannot let this nationally important site be damaged. You can find further information about the plans, our campaign to [#SaveBroadwaterLake](https://www.facebook.com/SaveBroadwaterLake) and details about how you can stand up for wildlife and have your voice heard on our dedicated webpage: hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/threat-broadwater-lake-sssi

How Conservation Grazing Allows Species to Thrive



© Matthew Roberts



Steven Werrell, our Senior Projects Officer, tells us about the significant impact grazing livestock are having on the habitats the Trust manages and shares some exciting developments!

Grazing livestock have an important role in habitat management on a number of our nature reserves. Choosing to eat the more dominant and vigorous plants, they allow less competitive and more desirable species to thrive. As well as impacting on the variety of plant species you'll be able to enjoy on our reserves, this increases the range of invertebrates they attract and the birds, mammals and amphibians who prey upon them.

It's not just what cattle eat that increases biodiversity, their presence has a range of other benefits. Cattle pull up plants with their strong tongues, make holes with their hooves and flatten areas, thus creating microhabitats, which are incredibly important for a whole host of insects. This action also creates patches of bare ground where plants can set seed - again allowing less abundant species to thrive. When cattle lay or roll on the ground, they increase structural diversity which is important for ground-nesting birds, like Lapwings and Snipe. Of course, livestock then create dung and this is yet another essential habitat and one which you can safely delve into with our Reserves Manager, Ian Carle on page 22 in his Weir and Wonderful Wildlife article.

What animals do we use on our reserves and why?

Most of the time the Trust uses traditional, native breeds. Cattle, such as Red Polls and Dexters, are ideally suited to our sites as they are smaller, hardier and are well-matched to grazing our native



Water Buffalo at Thorley Wash © Robert Phillips

vegetation. These breeds are naturally more docile and therefore more suitable on sites with many visitors. Sheep are also used to graze our sites, with breeds such as Shetlands and Herdwicks traditionally carrying out much of the work. This summer we used a grazer with a herd of Greyface Dartmoor sheep at Aldbury Nowers - creating a quintessential view of the English countryside for visitors and improving prospects for species such as Pyramidal Orchid, Autumn Gentian and Wild Marjoram.

In an exciting development, July saw us introduce a herd of Water Buffalo to graze our Thorley Wash Nature Reserve. Thorley Wash is a great example of a fen habitat - a real rarity in Hertfordshire. Being more tolerant of water-logged conditions than domestic cattle, the Water Buffalo were considered to be the best livestock option to graze the 13-hectare wetland site.



© Tom Day

In just over a month, they cleared the dense and scrubby vegetation to improve the habitat in the reserve's central compartment. This will benefit species such as Water Voles, which were successfully reintroduced to the reserve in 2015. This innovative approach to habitat management at the site provides a more natural approach to the alternative of using heavy machinery to keep the ditches clear. We're hopeful that next year, the Water Buffalo will return to graze the site for longer and across more of the reserve. Now the work starts to prepare the infrastructure that will enable that!

Technology and conservation grazing

In August this year, Archers Green took on an idyllic scene worthy of an old master as cattle grazed the grasslands alongside the meandering River Mimram - and all the more picturesque for a lack of river-side fencing! This was due to the cattle wearing *Nofence* GPS collars, which allow the grazer to create an invisible boundary. So, whilst the cattle improved biodiversity in the rich grasslands, where species such as Southern Marsh Orchid and Meadow Saxifrage are found, technology prevented them from entering the river and disturbing the fragile habitat.

We hope this article goes to show you just how important grazing animals can be in helping us to manage habitats to enable wildlife to thrive. If you would like to find out more about the timing of grazing on our reserves,

care of livestock and the precautions you need to take when visiting sites where grazing livestock are present, please read our blog 'Grazing on our Reserves' at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/grazing-our-reserves



Greyface Dartmoor Sheep © Dan Townsend



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Check out this video from our friends at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, which demonstrates how we can safely enjoy wild spaces with our four-legged friends.

gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/the-canine-code

If you would be interested in volunteering for one of our Livestock Checker volunteer roles next summer, please keep an eye on the latest opportunities

hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities

Your Wild WINTER



Tim Hill © Frieda Rummenhohl

Tim Hill, the Trust's Conservation Manager gives some ideas for going wild this winter in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.



Snowdrops at Aldbury Nowers © Josh Kubale



Treecreeper © Josh Kubale

Wild Winter Woodlands

In mid-winter, as temperatures plummet, most of us are lucky enough to be able to flick a switch and be warmed by central heating powered by gas, oil or electricity. In the past almost everyone would have relied on their local woodlands to heat their homes and cook their food and most of our woodlands have been shaped by the need for fuel.

Hertfordshire's old woodlands are dominated by two species, Oak and Hornbeam. Traditionally these woods would have been used productively, the Oaks allowed to grow tall then cut to provide large timbers for frames of houses. The faster growing Hornbeam was managed as a crop and harvested on a 15-25 year cycle, depending on growing conditions. The Hornbeam

was coppiced – cut to a stump, or 'stool', from which many new stems grow. Woodlands were divided into blocks and the rotational cutting meant that all stages of woodland development would be present from bare ground through to a closed canopy, just before harvesting. This variety of conditions supported a great diversity of wildlife – woodland flowers bloom when shading is removed. During the 20th century other forms of fuel became available which meant that widescale coppicing declined. Most coppicing carried out today is for nature conservation reasons, in an effort to restore and maintain a diversity of habitats. Mid-winter, when the trees are bare, is a great time to explore woodlands and look for signs of historical management such as coppicing and seek out some winter wildlife. In Balls Wood near Hertford Heath and Old Park Wood in Harefield, there are many old coppice stumps



Coppice stools at Balls Wood

which have not been cut for over a hundred years. Here the stems have thickened to 10-15cms in diameter and many of the stumps have become wide and gnarled over time. Some of the oldest coppice stools are found on the tops of banks, next to ditches – often markers for ancient boundaries. The nooks and crannies in these old stools provide home to many insects and where there are holes in their bases below ground level, amphibians such as Common Toads and Great Crested Newts will hibernate through the cold winter months. The old stems are a favourite with feeding Treecreepers, lifting bark to search out unwary spiders beneath. Stand quietly and listen for their high-pitched 'sirri' calls. To help you get to grips with all the birds as you walk the woods I recommend downloading the free 'Merlin Bird ID' App which, through the wonders of technology will identify each species by its winter call and even list the birds for you!

With soaring fuel prices, woodlands are now being considered as a viable source of energy once more. On some larger estates, woodlands

are being used to provide fuel on a commercial basis through woodchip. If managed with wildlife in mind, such use of woodlands has the potential to restore and even increase biodiversity.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more about the App Tim mentions at merlin.allaboutbirds.org



Common Toad © Dave Willis

The Music of Nature

Some years ago, at the British Birdwatching Fair I was lucky enough to listen to Tom McKinney give an entertaining and fascinating talk titled 'Inspired by Birds', based on a programme he had presented on Radio 4. His talk was a joy, highlighting how composers such as Richard Wagner and Olivier Messiaen have used bird song as strong themes in their music. It's fair to say that Messiaen is an acquired taste – have a listen and see what you think! However, the piece that really stuck in my head was the third movement of the fifth symphony by Jean Sibelius – a song of swans. The Finnish composer was inspired by the honking calls of Whooper Swans flying overhead and used his interpretation of their sounds as a recurring theme throughout the movement – it's a magical piece of music with an extraordinary finale.

Unfortunately, Whooper Swans are only occasional visitors to our counties but nonetheless we can take inspiration from the sounds of our more regular local wildfowl – the birds that descend upon the

wetlands of the Colne Valley in their thousands, from November onwards. My favourite time is the half hour after sunset. As darkness falls, there is a mass movement of birds with some leaving, some arriving and others just moving around the lakes. All this action is accompanied by a cacophony of quacking as the ducks communicate with one another – in our language it would probably be a mix of, "Hi!" "Evening!" "Long-time no see!" "Off now." "See you tomorrow!" "Sleep tight!" "See you later!", or even "Good Night John Boy!" for those reading who remember the



Pochard at sunset © Joy Russell

Sensing Winter

See this:

Enjoy the delicate subdued colours and textures of winter's mantle across the landscape.

Smell this:

Take a winter walk in search of winter flowers, stopping to take in the delicate honey-like scent of Snowdrops.

Hear this:

Listen for the 'chack-chack-chack' call of Fieldfares moving through the countryside.

Feel this:

Go out in the rain, look-up and feel the joy of cold, wintery raindrops running down your face.

Ways to experience and enjoy winter

Follow you, follow me. Winter is a time of hardship for our wildlife as they search for sufficient food in the short days. Many bird species join forces at this time, flocking together. Not only does many pairs of eyes make finding food easier but all those eyes also can spot potential predators. Birds such as Fieldfares highlighted for their chacking calls, are often seen with Redwings, forming loose gangs which adopt a nomadic lifestyle, roaming through the countryside in search of fruits such as haws (the berries of Hawthorn). If we experience harsh conditions in late winter these birds will sometimes venture into towns, as food supplies in the wider landscape are depleted. At times like this we can all help by halving apples and throwing them out onto the ground or even spiking them onto branches in the garden.

Counting out time. There's nothing quite like a brisk walk in the cold of winter to clear the head and lift the spirits. If you're able to find a walk from home which can be done weekly and which covers a variety of habitats, take a close look at the ground as you go and make a note of the numbers of plants appearing as winter progresses. It will be slow going at first with bare soil dominating but as winter progresses and the days lengthen, more and more shoots will emerge, counting down to spring and the joyous blooming of the first flowers. How about taking part in the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland's New Year Plant Hunt? Find out more at bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt

Ripples. It's easy to think that watching ponds is an activity only for the warm days of summer when they are teeming with life. Well that's largely true, but watching ponds in winter is an experience which may reveal hidden wonders. Patience is the key and ripples provide the evidence of life. The Moorhen is our quintessential pond bird, its long-toed feet enabling it to walk over the soft muddy margins of ponds, doing its best to escape being seen by keeping to the cover any vegetation provides. Ponds in larger wetlands may provide home to the Water Rail, even

more elusive than the Moorhen and more likely to give away its presence by its piglet-like squealing calls. If very lucky you may spot it dashing between areas of cover, its scarlet scimitar-like bill a key feature to clinch identification. Watching the surface of the water, tiny ripples maybe a sign of Minnows or Sticklebacks but their ventures to the surface need to be brief to avoid becoming a meal for a visiting Kingfisher or Grey Heron whose eyes are even more sensitive than ours to the ripples, mindful that whatever caused them may well be a good meal...



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Get tips on how to feed garden birds in winter at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/how-feed-garden-birds-winter

Find out more about the species mentioned in Tim's article at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer



Join an event

Check out our winter event listings on the back page and at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events



Wild Snaps 2023

For the fourth year in a row, we asked you to get 'snap happy' and join us in revelling in the wonderful wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex through the lenses of our Wild Snaps Photography Competition entrants.

Wild Snaps celebrates the beauty, variety and strength of the wildlife and habitats in the region, and helps people connect with nature. This year, under the category of 'General Wildlife' we welcomed traditional amateur photographers and

smartphone snappers to submit their entries, opening the competition to both adults and under 18's. The result has been a wealth of stunning images hitting our inbox, giving our panel of judges the difficult job of selecting a shortlist of the best photographs.

Our thanks go to our superb judging panel - Tim Hill, Conservation Manager and Chair of the Wild Snaps judging panel - a keen photographer himself Tim has contributed many images to Wildlife Matters and other Trust publications over the past 20



Common Carder Bee - Under 18's Smartphone © Jason Clayton

years, Louise Turner - an award-winning journalist and filmmaker who heads up the features department at Channel 4 News, Tom Hanner - an award-winning wildlife filmmaker and photographer who has worked with National Geographic and the BBC Natural History Unit, and Jeanette Lendon of Jet Black Squares - a professional photographer who has hung up her long lens and now champions smartphone photography across the UK.

The images shortlisted went out to a public vote, which decided the winners. A number of photos also received commendation from the judges.

In the Adult Camera category, Lesley Fidell's wonderfully detailed photo of a Honey Bee taken on a Ceanothus plant in her Watford back garden won the hearts of the public. Lesley captured the shot on a Nikon D7500 with a 105mm Macro lens. Winner of the Adult Smartphone category, Peter White fortunately had his iPhone to hand when he spotted a distinctively-marked Wasp Spider in Stevenage's Fairlands Valley Park. Peter's focus was so good that no cropping or editing were needed to show off its wild beauty.

It was great to see the quality of entries from younger members of our community. Congratulations to Megan O'Callaghan, in the Under 18's Camera category, for her fabulous shot of a fast-moving Grey Squirrel, which she did well to freeze frame on her Canon EOS 90D, whilst her subject took a pause on a bird table in her garden. Megan has said she likes to call her image 'Runny Nose' and we think you will see why! Jason Clayton pulled off a great shot of a Common Carder Bee to win the Under 18's Smartphone category - picture-perfect, it needed no editing.

It's notable that three of our winners - Lesley, Megan and Jason all took their photos in their back gardens, showing you don't have to travel far to be wowed by wildlife!

Congratulations to all of our winners and thank you to our wonderful corporate donors of prizes for our Wild Snaps Photography Competition. We were delighted to be able to award the talented photographers with wildlife watching equipment donated by competition sponsors, Opticron, Smartphone Photography Workshops courtesy of Jet Black Squares, and sustainable gifts from Tommy & Lottie.

Tim Hill, Conservation Manager and Chair of the Wild Snaps judging panel said: "Photography is a great way to connect with wildlife as it can make us look more closely at what is around us, putting in to focus

the beauty that exists in nature. Peering through a viewfinder trying to capture those perfect moments in nature is a wonderfully mindful activity and can be a real tonic to our wellbeing. Capturing the exquisiteness of animals and plants also raises awareness of their fragility and how important conserving wildlife is at all levels, all of which supports our strategy of 30% of land protected or managed for wildlife by 2030.

"I hope these tremendous photos bring joy to all who see them."



Wasp Spider - Adult Smartphone © Peter White



Grey Squirrel - Under 18's Camera © Megan O'Callaghan

Enjoy this gallery of shortlisted entries, which were commended by the Wild Snaps judging panel. We hope they inspire you to have a go next year!

Wild Snaps



Common Garden Spider © Stephen Smith



Muntjac Deer © Josh Lawrence



Azure Damselfly © Allan Burrows



Hares © James Goodman



Barn Owl © Robert Kitchen



FIND OUT MORE

Online
View all of the shortlisted images and read the photographer's stories behind them at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wild-snaps-photography-competition-2023

○ — Do

Get snapping! We always enjoy seeing your photos so please share them with us on socials on Twitter/X @HMWTBadger and on Facebook and Instagram @hertswildlifetrust

Winter Visits to Lemsford Springs

As the weather cools, Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve becomes a hive of activity for waterbirds and birdwatchers. The site has an array of habitats: river, marsh, willow woodland, hedgerow and meadow, but it is its old spring-fed watercress bed that makes it particularly valuable for aquatic birds, as it does not freeze. Add to that the plentiful supply of freshwater shrimp in the undisturbed lagoons, and there's an abundant food source whatever the weather.



Jack Snipe with Common Snipe © Barry Trevis



Barry Trevis Warden © Debbie Bigg

Barry Trevis has been the volunteer Warden at Lemsford Springs for over 42 years. Here, Barry tells us about last winter's visitors.

"In October 2022, a Jack Snipe turned up on the Reserve after an absence of over six years. The bird disappeared shortly afterwards but when the prolonged cold spell hit in mid-December up to three Jack Snipe were regularly seen, along with 14 Common Snipe and a German-ringed Water Rail – all this activity attracted an influx of birdwatchers and photographers, as well as much activity on social media! Immediately after Christmas, milder weather and many days of rain meant the sodden ground opened up an unfrozen feeding habitat and the birds subsequently left only to reappear in mid-January when temperatures dropped below freezing, in both the day and night.

Barry continues, "The reason that we saw such human excitement is because Jack Snipe are usually very

secretive birds and are generally only seen when they are flushed out of vegetation. However, two of the birds could be viewed from the hide, just 6m away, and also nearby Common Snipe provided an excellent comparison between the two similar species.

"Aside from the snipe, the Reserve holds the highest number/density of Green Sandpipers in winter in the country – on some occasions 14 of the species were present together, including one colour-ringed bird which we know to be over 12 years old."

Wetland habitats support an abundance of plant life, which in turn

provide perfect shelter, nurseries, feeding and breeding grounds for wildlife. With only 1% of wetland covering Hertfordshire, Lemsford Springs is a truly special place, thanks to its natural assets and the efforts of our army of volunteers who keep the lagoons open and control the amount of invasive reed and sedge. It's a wonderful reserve for a winter visit – members are able to collect a key to the reserve from 11 Lemsford Village, which will give access to the reserve's entrance immediately to the right and to well-positioned hides, providing respite from the elements. You might just get lucky and see some of the species Barry has mentioned above!



Lemsford Springs © Debbie Bigg



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more about Lemsford Springs at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/lemsford-springs

Discover more about the species in this article in our Wildlife Explorer hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer

Do share your photos with us on social media! On Twitter/X @HMWTBadger and on Facebook and Instagram @hertswildlifetrust

○ — Do

Apply to join our volunteer work parties on our reserves hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering



Marvels of the night sky

Our Director of Nature Recovery, Chloë Edwards, shares her joy of bat watching, some fascinating facts about these creatures of the night, and explains how we are safeguarding their future through our core work and knowledge-building projects.

It's a late August evening, the light is fading and I'm sat at the bottom of the garden gazing skyward and keenly awaiting the arrival of a regular visitor to my patch at this time of year. The wait is always laced with a little anxiety that perhaps tonight they won't visit, but it's short-lived as a sudden flash of a familiar silhouette passes overhead and I'm instantly both relieved and mesmerised by this creature's near

silent presence. My eyes try to track its movements but it's swift and agile, performing quite remarkable acrobatics above me, and such is the almost erratic nature of its rapid, sharp turns it disappears beyond my gaze and the sky feels quite empty for just a moment. Diving back into my field of vision, I'm captivated once again, trying to imagine how it would feel to tumble so intelligently and elegantly through the air

using just sound to create a map of my surroundings to seek out a meal. There is seemingly no let-up in this astonishing aerial display, but on the cusp of darkness it's time to retreat indoors. As I wander back to the house I reflect on how this magical nocturnal spectacle will be replicated over other gardens, through woodlands and along rivers and hedgerows the whole night long until the sun rises and we start again.



Nathusius' Pipistrelle © Terry Whittaker 2020/VISION

The source of my summer evening joy was a Common Pipistrelle, one of 18 species of bat found in the UK. Incredibly, bats make up almost a third of all mammal species here and are the only true flying mammal.

One of the most astonishing feats of bats is their mastery of flight. What makes their aerial abilities even more astounding is that, unlike birds, they have evolved this capability without feathers. Bats' wings are essentially elongated finger bones covered

by a thin membrane of skin, which allows for incredible agility and precision during flight. Bats have also developed an extraordinary navigational system known as echolocation which enables them to emit high-pitched sound waves and use the echoes bouncing back to create a mental picture of whatever environment they're flying in. Echolocation not only helps bats locate prey in complete darkness but also assists them in avoiding obstacles during their high-speed flight. Speaking of prey, bats are voracious insect-eaters with a single Common Pipistrelle capable of consuming some 3000 insects each night (including many of those that are likely to bite us!) and as such they play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems by regulating our insect populations. Because bats are associated with a diverse array of habitats, (including wetlands, woodlands, farmland and urban), feed on insects and are sensitive to changes in the environment, they are hugely valuable indicators of the broader well-being of the UK's wildlife.

Nathusius' Pipistrelles are a crevice-dwelling species, roosting in wall cavities, under flat roofs or even tree hollows. They have a particular affinity with water so most roosts are found very close to lakes, rivers or canals. We've been working with the Bat Conservation Trust to monitor their presence at a few wetland sites in the county, including Stocker's Lake, and to undertake groundbreaking tracking work which is revealing invaluable insight in this bat's migratory habits. We often celebrate the navigational triumphs of our migratory bird species as they traverse the globe each year, but this tiny bat can rival those with some travelling all the way to Russia in spring and returning to the UK in autumn. A bat tagged near Stocker's Lake travelled 2018 km to Russia – the second longest migration of a bat ever recorded.

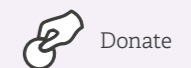
Up until just ten years ago, when the first maternity roost (where female bats gather to have their young each year) was found near Bishops Stortford, **Barbastelle** bats were presumed to be extinct in Hertfordshire. They are an elusive species of bat which we still know very little about, but working with Herts and Middlesex Bat Group we've been trying to improve our understanding and identify more maternity roosts through innovative tracking techniques, and so far we've located two more roosts at St Paul's Walden and the Ashridge Estate. Ancient woodland is very important for this species as they will use the features found on veteran Oak trees, such as loose bark and old woodpecker holes for roosting. Once located, we can provide advice on woodland management and wider landscape management to landholders.



Barbastelle © Shutterstock

Historically, bats have been somewhat misunderstood and underappreciated, and sadly several British bat species are either at risk of extinction or threatened. Here at the Trust, much of our core work ensures bats can continue to thrive in the region, be it responding to planning applications that could threaten roosting or foraging sites, or advising landholders in the wider countryside on the creation of insect-rich habitats or measures to reconnect our landscapes. We've also been focussing our efforts on projects to benefit two of our rarest bat species, the Nathusius' Pipistrelle and the Barbastelle bat.

Bats are truly a marvel of nature; a vital part of our ecosystem and they are deserving of a whole lot more admiration!



Double your love for bats!

You can show your support for bats by donating to our Big Give Bats Appeal – for one week only, starting on 28 November, all donations made via bit.ly/3tH7UjI will be doubled up to a maximum of £13,900.



FIND OUT MORE

Find out more about 'Brilliant Bats' at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/brilliant-bats



Weird and Wonderful Wildlife Dung lovers!

We've already seen in our conservation grazing article on page 10 that different grazing animals have their own effect on the habitat that they are grazing, increasing biodiversity and negating the need to use heavy machinery, but did you know that their dung also supports a different suite of species? Not only that, as the dung ages the community of organisms associated with it changes too - making it a fascinating habitat through which to study the ecological process of succession! Here, Reserves Manager, Ian Carle encourages us to put our gloves on, pop a peg on our noses and delve in to the ripe old world of dung!



YELLOW DUNG FLY

Adult mites are also often found in dung where they feed on other insect eggs and larvae. These wingless arachnids find their way to the dung by hitching a ride on flies!

Many other groups of insects visit dung to feed, some on the dung itself, others to prey upon other visitors or to take advantage of its larder of insect larvae. Some of our prettiest insects have been known to visit dung for nutrients - the Purple Emperor has a particular penchant for poo! Older cow pats are visited by centipedes on the look out for insect prey, and predatory beetles such as rove beetles will also use dung as a hunting ground.

As you will know by now, one of the best ways to increase the biodiversity of an area of open habitat is to ensure it is grazed - we have already seen the many benefits of using livestock over machinery. However, it's vital to ensure the grazing animals are not treated with certain antiparasitic drugs which continue to have a detrimental effect on the dung fauna.

Dung diversity

The invertebrates most commonly found in dung as adults are beetles and arachnids such as mites, other insect groups such as flies and wasps. Two of the most noticeable flies associated with dung are the Noon Fly and Yellow Dung Fly, both using dung to lay their eggs - the Yellow Dung Fly is less fussy about the type of dung, but the Noon Fly seems to prefer cow pats. Once the eggs hatch the larvae feed on the larvae of other insects within the dung.

Dung succession

Focussing on beetles, perhaps the best studied group, early successional beetles such as *Sphaeridium lunatum* arrive in 1-5 days, the early arrivals literally swim through the fresh dung! Mid successional species such as *Aphodius (Agrilinus) rufus* arrive within 6-10 days and late successional species such as *Aphodius (Teuchestes) fossor* dominate the community after 10-25 days.

What's your po(o)ison?

As mentioned above, some insects have a preference for dung from a particular type of animal. In our area there are records for dung beetles such as the Near Threatened *Aphodius (Plagiogonus) arenarius* from sheep dung, and the nationally scarce *Aphodius (Agrilinus) constans* from cow dung. Some of our dung associated



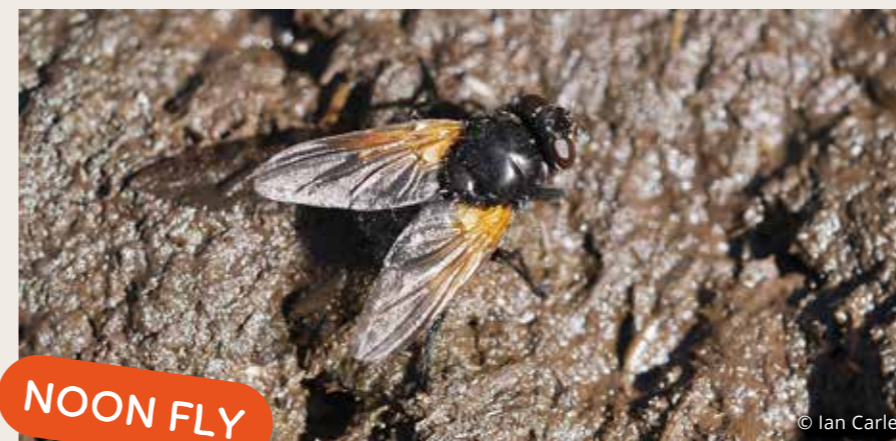
FEMALE MINOTAUR BEETLE

species of beetles have more cosmopolitan tastes - the Minotaur Beetle for example usually takes rabbit dung back to its burrows for its larvae to feed on, but it has also been known to use horse droppings, and species such as *Aphodius (Esymus) pusillus* that don't mind whose dung it is as long as it's from a herbivore!



DID YOU KNOW?

Australia has no native dung beetle fauna, so to prevent pasture becoming covered in slowly decomposing cattle dung beetles were imported to help speed the process up.



NOON FLY



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more about some of the invertebrates mentioned in this article at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer



We save nature through people - all people

We have a vision of a wilder Hertfordshire and Middlesex – more nature everywhere, for everyone. Engagement Manager, Heidi Mansell shares how that can happen.



Being in nature is so important for us all as human beings. Whether it is a place to find some peace or somewhere to enjoy watching wildlife, a lot of us spend time in nature in ways that greatly benefit our daily lives. Those of us who have access to nature experience huge benefits in both our physical and mental health.

We are in a nature and climate emergency and we will only save nature through action by people: all people. Therefore, positive nature recovery has to prioritise equality, diversity and inclusion because right now, not everyone feels included.

Natural England commissioned an 'Included outside' publication series in 2022 that demonstrated how many groups of people and individuals do not feel welcome or supported to join organised outdoor activities

– or even feel safe in nature. As a movement, The Wildlife Trusts must reflect on this and commit to change what we do and how we do it.

We must put our hands up and recognise that there is much, much more that we can do as Wildlife Trusts to better understand and address these inequalities that are experienced by many people and communities. This starts with listening and learning.

So, what are the key changes and actions that the Wildlife Trusts are embracing through their shared *Wild about Inclusion plans*?

We must have diverse and inclusive leadership – to embrace the challenge of increasing diversity and to recognise the contribution that diversity makes to our movement and wildlife.

We must work to increase our own diversity – becoming more relevant to more people by ensuring that the makeup of our staff and trustees reflect the diversity of the community in which we live and work.

We must cultivate an inclusive movement – where difference is celebrated, everyone can be themselves, feel respected and feel able to contribute to their full potential. This requires us to identify and tackle our own unconscious bias so that the ethos of inclusivity can run through every element of our work.

We must communicate inclusively with staff and communities – being intentionally inclusive and nurturing a sense of belonging, we need to demonstrate solidarity for people from different backgrounds, abilities, and identities, and ensure they are empowered to value, speak up and take action for wildlife.

Provide access and engagement for everyone – increase our engagement with diverse communities, reach out to people and better understand and overcome barriers to accessing and engaging with nature.

There is much more that needs to come from us on this journey but we are committed to this path and have started to bring about change.



Wildfest participants © Debbie Bigg
Locally, this can be seen in our Nextdoor Nature projects and Nature Recovery work, where we are reaching out to people, communities and landholders where they are. We have

also started working on our reserves too, sharing best practice around accessibility and trying to make sure that we remove as many barriers to being in nature as possible.

Most recently we have been partnering with local charity SPACE Hertfordshire to run an events programme specifically for families with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Approximately 9% of all children in the UK have SEND, according to the Government's Family Resources Survey 2021/2022. This is a large group of young people and their families that often require extra support, consideration, adaptation or flexibility in order to feel included, welcomed and able to contribute to their full potential.

There is so much more that needs to come from us but we will constantly strive to meet the needs of different people and communities and take deliberate action so that people feel welcome, respected, valued, and able to get involved.

We are always keen to work with organisations or individuals who aim to improve access to nature for diverse groups or are keen to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in the conservation sector. Please do get in touch with the Wilder Communities Team and give us your ideas, thoughts and feedback at wildersupport@hmwt.org



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Discover more about Nextdoor Nature at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nextdoor-nature-lottery-fund

Learn more about SPACE Hertfordshire at spaceherts.org.uk

Find out more about Natural England's 'Included outside' publication series here bit.ly/49a3fMZ

What Can We All Do to Support the Natural World

One Quick Win for Wildlife - Plogging!

Here's one way to immerse ourselves in nature this winter and help the environment and amazing wildlife at the same time.

It's free, outdoors, for all ages and great for our wellbeing while giving nature and the environment a helping hand. Plogging is about being active and picking up litter on our usual walk or run. The movement has come out of Sweden and by using a word blend of 'jogging' and 'plocka upp' (Swedish for 'to pick up') they have given us plogging. An activity that can be done on our own, with family, friends or as a group. It can last as little or as long as we like with positive benefits for us, our communities and the natural world! Every action, no matter how small makes all the difference. Go on... seize the moment and get plogging!



Litter picking © Jon Hawkins

Enjoy free of charge

Wildlife Wave

All of us have a part to play in spreading the word about the nature crisis and empowering others that there is something they can do to help. Why do we need more people talking about wildlife? Because we need more people on nature's side. We would love to challenge our members to have a conversation with just one other person about helping local wildlife. Let's try to create a wave of conversations. Why not share something that you have noticed this winter, with someone walking past? It could be the frost on a spider's web, some vibrant and shiny fungus or a Robin belting a song out. When we notice things in nature, we build a connection to it and your enthusiasm for the natural world will almost certainly capture others.



Fly Agaric © Jon Hawkins

Our Wild Supporters

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

Wildlife Guardians Giving Circle

Will you become a Wildlife Guardian?

Become part of this new special group of committed individuals, who share a passion for protecting wildlife across Hertfordshire and Middlesex with an annual gift of £500 or more. You will come together with like-minded supporters to create a wilder future, and have the opportunity to enjoy a special relationship with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Your gift will help to create thriving habitats for wildlife and you will be protecting some of our rarest species of plants, insects, birds and mammals.

- **£500** could support the use of an excavator to restore one pond for amphibians and invertebrates, including frogs, toads and dragonflies.
- **£1,000** could support livestock to graze one of our wildflower meadows for one year, restricting scrub and allowing delicate wildflowers to thrive.
- **£2,500** could restore a stretch of chalk river, putting the 'wiggles' back into the river channel to benefit spawning fish including Brown Trout.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/guardians



In remembrance

We would like to thank Sheila Mary Weeks and Muriel James for kindly leaving a gift to the Trust in their wills. We are extremely grateful to both Sheila and Muriel for thoughtfully remembering the Trust in this special way. Our condolences go to their friends and family.

Thank you to the friends and family of Della Walker, Iris and Allan Thompson, Brenda Barrett, John Gardner, Barbara Armitage and Jean Allen who chose to support the Trust in their memories. These thoughtful donations make a lasting contribution to our local conservation work and help ensure that the wildlife their loved ones cherished is protected for years to come.

Our thanks and condolences go out to you all.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

If you'd like more information about leaving a legacy or gifting in memory of a loved one, please contact legacies@hmwt.org or visit hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/donate/memory

Archers Green campaign update

Thanks to the incredible support of our members, local communities, businesses, and grant allocations we have reached our £500,000 target for the Archers Green appeal!

We are particularly grateful for the extremely generous legacy allocation to the campaign in October, which was instrumental in enabling us to reach our target.



£ Aldwickbury School's big cheque, big donation!

We were thrilled to be chosen as Aldwickbury School's chosen charity this year and to hear how the pupils, staff and families raised money with bake sales, discos and the AFA Summer Bazaar! The amazing donation of £5,980.41 will help us to secure a wilder future - looking after our nature reserves, protecting local wildlife and empowering communities to stand up for nature. Well done and thank you for all your hard work fundraising for us - it will really make a difference!



Mayor of Hertford chooses to support the Trust

We were all thrilled to be chosen by the Mayor of Hertford, Cllr Vicky Smith, as one of her two chosen charities along with Mudlarks. As a chosen charity, we will be the focus of the Mayor's fundraising activities during the year which is wonderful support for our work. Added to that we are attending a range of events and have provided prizes for the Mayor's wildlife-inspired art competition over the summer too.

The two Trust prize winners were Ghislaine Peart and Meggie Nikolic - very worthy winners, I'm sure you'll agree!



Allium giganteum © Meggie Nikolic Embroidery Waxwing © Ghislaine Peart

£ Our New Lottery

Late last year, The Weather Lottery was replaced by our new lottery - Sterling lotteries (Unity). You, your friends and family have the chance to win £25,000 whilst supporting the Trust with a lottery e-voucher, available at £1 per entry. E-vouchers are available to gift too!



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more at unitylottery.co.uk/causes/herts-middlesex-wildlife-trust/



Business Members get snap-happy for wildlife

Local recruitment agency and Trust Business Member, MPI Ltd raised a fantastic £280 for the Trust through their Wildlife Photo Competition as part of their participation in our 30 Days Wild campaign. Thank you for choosing us - and well done to all your staff who entered the competition and showcased their wonderful photographs.

"Throughout June MPI Limited, organised a wildlife photo competition for our staff, with a promise to donate £5 to the Trust for every entry. A total of 28 entries were received and included insects, wild flowers and beautiful landscapes. Voting was then run on all social platforms for one week, with a promise to double the donation if 300 votes were met - a target that was met with days to spare!"

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 and look forward to more opportunities to promote these values with the trust in the future in other innovative ways."

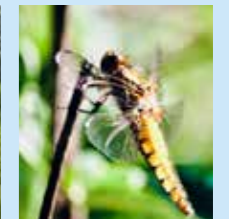
Lydia Partington, MPI Limited



Lauren Ridley - 1st



Natalie Hirst - 2nd



Becci Sparks - 3rd



Harpenden Carnival © James Rose, Harpenden Round Table



Our thanks to the Harpenden Round Table

We are delighted and most grateful for having been chosen as one of the three 'headline' charities for the Harpenden Summer Carnival in June, organised by the Harpenden Round Table. The Trust received a total of over £2,300 with our thanks to all the Round Table members, as well as anyone who attended and supported this lovely local event.

"Harpenden Round Table, organisers of the Harpenden Summer Carnival this

year, were proud to support and donate towards the vital work Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust do in our local area. The annual event attracts thousands to Harpenden Common where all can enjoy music, performance, stalls and activities throughout the day. We hope it also raised awareness of volunteering opportunities and of the importance of protecting our local habitats."

James Rose, Harpenden Round Table



Harpenden Carnival © Petra Green



Getting the most out of your Membership and What's On

We hope you're already aware of how important your membership is to our work for nature's recovery and of the enjoyment it can bring to you too.

Here's a quick recap and a huge thank you for all your support. As a member you can:

- Enjoy exploring over 40 nature reserves across the region
- Speak up for nature and influence decision making
- Take an active role in conservation work as a volunteer or trustee
- Read the latest news, in-depth wildlife articles, interviews and guides to the local area in our magazine, e-news and *Wildscapes* guide
- Be part of a community of like-minded wildlife enthusiasts
- Have access to exclusive members-only events
- Benefit from supporter discounts and promotions

And of course, protect local wild areas and priority habitats to help wildlife thrive across Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

As we head into winter, we welcome you to check out the exciting events already scheduled, 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.

January

11 January **Winter Wildfowl Guided Walk at Stocker's Lake**, Rickmansworth
10.00am – 12.00pm

18 January **Gulls Galore**, Hilfield Park Reservoir, between Bushey and Elstree
3.00pm – 5.00pm

Most of our events are free to attend and many are suitable for families. Please note that places are limited, so we encourage you to sign-up as soon as you can to avoid disappointment. If you haven't already, you can also sign up to e-news which brings information on some of the latest events into your inbox every month.



Join an event



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Find out more and book your spot at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events. Sign up to receive e-news on our homepage at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk

Black-headed Gull ©Tim Hill



Give the Gift of Wildlife this Festive Season

This year, why not gift someone a better future for wildlife. Giving a wild gift will support nature on your doorstep and give your recipient the joy of knowing wildlife near them is being looked after.

Wildlife sponsorships

By sponsoring a local species such as Hedgehog, Barn Owl or Water Vole you can help us create suitable habitats to protect our precious wildlife. Choose between our postal and digital packs. Psst... our digital wildlife sponsorships are the perfect last-minute gift and will arrive straight in your inbox.

- Digital wildlife sponsorship | £15
- Postal wildlife sponsorship | £20

Gift membership

Give the gift that keeps on giving. Treat a loved one to their own membership of supporting the Trust for a whole year. With individual, joint and family memberships available, there is a gift membership for all your loved ones.



FIND OUT MORE

Online

Explore the full range of wildlife gifts online at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/shop



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Individual membership | £42



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Joint membership | £48



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Family membership | £54