

News & Events

High speed rail will destroy nature reserve

10 January 2012

The proposed high speed rail route between London and Birmingham which has been given the go ahead by Transport Secretary Justine Greening today will devastate habitats and wildlife in the Denham/Harefield area.

High Speed 2 (HS2) will run through the Colne Valley, ripping through the Trust's [Broadwater Lake Nature Reserve](#).

The area is home to nationally important numbers of waterbirds, which will suffer significant habitat loss. In addition, Daubenton's and pipistrelle bats, which are European Protected Species, could be threatened. Broadwater Lake is one of the most important sites in the UK for Daubenton's bats.

New year, new plans

13 December 2011



The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and The Wildlife Trusts are reminding people to remember wildlife when making New Year's resolutions for 2012. Wildlife conservation in gardens is becoming increasingly important as more and more species are becoming endangered.

There are many easy and affordable ways in which to support nature in the UK. From budding city gardeners with limited outdoor space, to those with expansive lawns, New Year is a superb time to begin planning how to support wildlife and making green spaces more wildlife-friendly.

The charities suggest three ideas to attract wildlife:

- Setting up birdfeeders, nest boxes, ladybird lodges and feeding hedgehogs will attract wildlife and are superb ways of getting children interested.
- For smaller urban gardens, roof terraces or balconies having a window-box with flowering plants such as lavender will attract hoverflies, bees and butterflies. It is recommended to choose plants with the RHS 'Perfect for Pollinators' logo and to avoid plants with double flowers as these may lack nectar or pollen.
- For households with space, building a pond will provide a rich habitat that attracts lots of different insects and animals. Making a pond with different depths will encourage a greater range of insects such as dragonflies and water beetles, as well as toads and frogs. Very shallow sloping edges are important – this is where the largest variety of pond creatures is found. A pond is also the ideal place for birds to bathe.

Visit Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's wildlife garden in Verulamium Park, St Albans to get some more ideas. Open all year round, free entry.

Already got a fantastic wildlife garden? Enter it into The [Big Wildlife Garden competition!](#)



Greenest government ever...?

6 December 2011



In his Autumn Statement, the Chancellor, George Osborne announced a review of the EU Habitats Regulations in England.

He claimed these regulations impose a 'ridiculous cost on British businesses'. Implementation of the Habitats Regulations in England protects sites and species of European importance at land and sea, including Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, like [Amwell Nature Reserve](#) near Hertford.

The Chancellor's suggestion that the implementation of these regulations can be weakened, on top of the [shake up of the planning system which fails to recognise Local Wildlife Sites](#) and [backtracking on the designation of marine conservation zones](#) seen in recent weeks, shows a stunning disregard for the value of the natural environment and a failure of our government to live up to its promise to be the 'greenest government ever'.

Take action today

Please write to your MP and urge them to ensure these sites continue to be protected. You can find out who your MP is on the [UK Parliament website](#).

All MPs can be reached by writing to them at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

[Read more](#) on The Wildlife Trusts' website.

Local wildlife's got the X Factor

23 November 2011

[Check out this talent...](#)

Rare visitor from eastern Asia

7 November 2011

An eastern crowned warbler, only the second ever to be recorded in Britain, dropped into Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's Hilfield Park Reservoir Nature Reserve near Bushey recently.

Bird ringers caught what they thought was a yellow-browed warbler, which in itself would be a rare bird for Hertfordshire. However, after checking some features that puzzled them, it turned out to be something much more unexpected. The bird is the first of its kind to be ringed in Britain.

[Full news release](#)

Wildlife at risk under new planning framework

24 October 2011

Save our Wildlife Sites: [Join us today](#)

Wildlife-rich areas in England equivalent to four and a half times the area of Greater London¹ could be at greater risk under the new planning system, according to The Wildlife Trusts.

The Government has now published an overhaul of the planning system in a National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out 'national priorities and rules' within a more simple system which 'safeguards the environment while meeting the need for sustainable growth'.

However, The Wildlife Trusts warn that any dilution of recognition, value and protection of Local Wildlife Sites will have dire long-term consequences for local communities and wildlife. The worry is that the new framework gives a green light to developers - it states: "*Decision-takers at every level should assume that the default answer to development proposals is "yes", except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in this Framework.*"

The Wildlife Trusts' Local Wildlife Sites survey

¹ There are at least 41,174 Local Wildlife Sites in England which cover an area of at least 711,201.13 hectares; equating to an area 4.5 times the area of Greater London, assuming Greater London is 1,572km².

[Full news release](#)

[Draft framework](#)

What you can do

[Email your MP](#)

Local Wildlife Sites are areas rich in wildlife, vital elements of The Wildlife Trusts' vision of a [Living Landscape](#). We want wildlife-rich areas to be connected, not fragmented. These sites could be threatened by the new planning system.

Find a template letter to send to your MP and more information at www.wildlifetrusts.org/nppf

[Join us today](#)

Our strength is in our numbers. Join more than 22,000 others who say wildlife matters to them in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

Planning application for new eco-office submitted

18 August 2011

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust together with Groundwork Hertfordshire have formally submitted an application for planning permission for a new, sustainably built office at the University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury campus, two miles from Hertford.

Both organisations have outgrown their current accommodation and the new building will allow for closer cooperation between the Trust and Groundwork, and shared use of facilities. There are a number of derelict and disused outbuildings on the prospective site which will be replaced by the new office.

Designs have been developed to enhance the historic parkland setting at Bayfordbury and the architects, Architype, are recognised as industry leaders in sustainable design, specialising in the green specification of materials and construction techniques.

Culling is not the cure

19 July 2011

The Wildlife Trusts are disappointed at the Government's decision today to pursue yet more trials of badger culling.

We do not see culling as the solution to the problem of bovine tuberculosis (bTB).

To press ahead with these pilots ignores the main body of scientific evidence relating to culling, which shows that at best it is ineffective, and at worst can exacerbate the problem.

Scientific evidence

The Independent Scientific Group has given us the definitive scientific view that badger culling provides 'no meaningful contribution' and is 'not cost effective' as a control measure for combating bovine tuberculosis. The full report is available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/isg/pdf/final_report.pdf

Vaccine research

Defra has an active programme of research into vaccines for both cattle and badgers. The Wildlife Trusts have been supporting field trials of badger vaccines on nature reserves. Further details of work on vaccine development are available at: <http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/wildlife/ecologyManagement/bvdp/>

[Full news release on The Wildlife Trusts' website](#)

[More on badgers and bovine tuberculosis](#)

Roadside 'mini-meadows' will encourage wildlife to Stevenage

11 July 2011

Grass will be encouraged to grow long on some roadside verges by Stevenage Borough Council and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust this summer, as part of a trial to help the town's wildlife to thrive. Longer grass will allow native wildflowers to bloom over the next few weeks and set their seeds. Insects such as butterflies and bees will be helped too, which in turn benefits birds that feed on them.

[Roadside mini-meadows in Stevenage - full news release](#)

Woodland project made possible with lottery award

22 June 2011

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are embarking on a huge project to restore and raise awareness of woodlands in South Hertfordshire, backed by a grant of £420,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund.

The three-year Woodlands for People and Wildlife project starts in September and will focus on [Gobions Wood](#) and [Fir and Pond Woods](#) Nature Reserves near Potters Bar and [Balls Wood](#) Nature Reserve near Hertford.

[Woodlands for People and Wildlife project - full news release](#)

Government's vision for nature unveiled

7 June 2011

The Natural Environment White Paper was published today, setting out the government's vision for the natural environment for the next fifty years.

In [The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature](#) the government has backed The Wildlife Trusts' approach to [conservation on a landscape-wide level](#) but the commitment to establish only 12 'Nature Improvement Areas' could seriously limit the scale of nature restoration. The Wildlife Trusts want to see nature restored across the whole country, not just in pockets.

There is also concern that not enough practical steps are outlined to deliver all 92 commitments put forward in the document.

The White Paper draws on data from the [UK National Ecosystem Assessment \(UK NEA\)](#) published last week, which attempts to accurately gauge the value of nature. It puts a value on a range of 'ecosystem services': for example the role of inland wetlands in water quality is thought to be worth around £1.5billion a year, and the report estimates that pollinators like bees contribute £430 million annually to the economy.

[Full response from The Wildlife Trusts](#)

[Our Living Landscape vision](#)

[Background to the White Paper](#)

A new era for nature conservation?

6 June 2011

The Natural Environment White Paper will be launched tomorrow, which should mark the start of an exciting new era for nature conservation.

The Wildlife Trusts have pushed for the government to take leadership and make the natural environment a priority. This White Paper is critical in setting a new direction. One in which the connections between a healthy natural environment, healthier people and a healthier economy are recognised.

[White paper news release](#)

Find out more about what the white paper is all about at <http://www.playyourpart4nature.org.uk/>

Changes to cookies

26 May 2011

Today European privacy laws come into force in the UK, with the intention of giving internet users more control over the data websites gather about them.

New rules require websites to obtain consent when placing 'cookies' on your computer, mobile or other device. [Find out how HMWT is responding to these changes.](#)

Funding for urgent orchard repairs secured

17 May 2011

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has been granted £50,000 to carry out urgent restoration work at a traditional orchard in Tewin. The one year project, which is funded by Biffaward and East Herts District Council, will restore rare local varieties of fruit trees and protect and enhance the diversity of wildlife at [Tewin Orchard Nature Reserve](#).

The orchard is home to a number of threatened species including great crested newts, noctule and brown long-eared bats, birds like yellowhammers and bullfinches and the rare white letter hairstreak butterfly. [Tewin orchard grant news release](#)

Enjoy the dawn chorus

27 April 2011

Get up *before* the lark and come to [Cassiobury Park Local Nature Reserve this Sunday](#) to celebrate International Dawn Chorus Day and enjoy the wonderful sound of nature waking up.

[Enjoy the dawn chorus](#)

Challenge to get High Speed Rail on the right lines

7 April 2011

A powerful alliance of respected organisations, including The Wildlife Trusts, has agreed a Charter that will hold the Government to account on its approach to High Speed Rail. The [Right Lines Charter](#), published today sets out four core principles 'for doing High Speed Rail well'.

The Charter calls for a national transport strategy, better future-proofing of big transport proposals, effective public participation and a more strategic approach to minimising adverse impacts. Its supporters seek to engage positively with the Government, as they believe the approach to High Speed Rail currently falls well short of the Charter's principles. [Full press release](#)

[What you can do about HS2](#)

Local MP supports funding for nature

1 April 2011

North East Herts MP, Oliver Heald, pledged this week to 'value our natural heritage' after meeting Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) at the House of Commons. The event was held to highlight the value of funding nature and its recovery. It showcased a number of Wildlife Trust projects funded by HLF around the UK.

Oliver Heald said, "It was great to meet Herts and Middlesex Chairman, Mike Master, to hear how HLF funded Wildlife Trust projects have brought benefits to wildlife and people locally. The Trust has 43 nature reserves covering almost 1900 acres, including several in my constituency such as land on Royston Heath, the chalk pit in Royston, Tewinbury SSSI and Ashwell Springs. I look forward to the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund continuing to work together to protect and restore nature and to help people engage with the natural world."

Trust embarks on Wild Stevenage project

15 March 2011

Funding has been secured for a fantastic new community project that will kick off this April. Wild Stevenage will improve key wildlife habitats and raise awareness of the town's natural heritage, with the help of a £50,000 grant from Heritage Lottery Fund.

The project will include the creation of a grasshopper sanctuary at Shackledell Grassland and a wild woodlands trail through Monks and Whomerley Woods next to Fairlands Valley Park. There will be wildlife identification courses and an 'adopt a pond' programme where Stevenage residents can help to restore and look after their community pond. More details to follow!

Wildlife protected at Waterford Heath

21 February 2011

Fantastic news:

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has secured a long lease at Waterford Heath which means protection and a future for the wildlife there. The Trust will be caring for the 100 acre site near Hertford for the next 85 years!

[Find out more about Waterford Heath Nature Reserve](#)

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