

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's 5yearplan



Herts and
Middlesex

2016-2021



A BETTER
FUTURE FOR *wildlife*

TIM HILL



“It is no exaggeration to say that without the work of the Trust **water voles would have gone extinct in our area by now**”

TOM MARSHALL



Introduction

The Trust aims to create an environment rich in wildlife and **over the last 50 years we have made a real difference to the wildlife of Herts and Middlesex, creating new wildlife habitats on our reserves and in the wider countryside and urban areas.**



We have helped people to value and become more aware of wildlife and the need for its conservation. Together this has resulted in growing populations of endangered species, such as the water vole and small blue butterfly, and many more people actively involved in protecting their local wildlife.

But wildlife remains in trouble. From hornbeams to heathlands, from greenfinches to grasshoppers, wildlife and wild places need help. Natural habitats are under threat and continue to be lost and fragmented whilst species continue to decline.

The Trust's new 50 Year Vision and five year plan encourages everyone to act now. Whether as an individual volunteer or member of the Trust, land manager, business, or the voluntary and government sector, you all have a vital role to play. Everyone can make a difference, so we invite you to get involved now in creating a **better future for wildlife.**

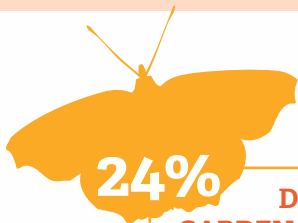
Mike Master
Chairman

Lesley Davies
Chief Executive

The UK since the 1960s



97% OF SPECIES-RICH
WILDFLOWER
MEADOWS LOST



24% DECLINE IN COMMON
GARDEN BUTTERFLY SPECIES



FEWER THAN **10%**
OF CHILDREN PLAY
IN NATURAL AREAS



**44
million**
FEWER
BREEDING BIRDS

50 Year Vision

Over the Trust's 50 year history there have been extensive changes to the status of wildlife across the UK with major habitat and species losses.

Whilst losses can happen rapidly, the recovery of nature takes longer. Our 50 Year Vision recognises the need for long term planning to secure a positive future for the wildlife of Herts & Middlesex.

OUR 50 YEAR VISION IS FOR:

- Increased area of wildlife habitat, that is better connected and in good ecological condition.
- 30% of the total land area being managed positively for wildlife alongside its other uses.
- A reversal in the growing disconnect between people and wildlife.
- Recognition of the link between a healthy natural environment and people's health and well-being.
- Government policy, legislation and funding that recognises the importance of wildlife and helps, not hinders, its conservation.

Priorities for 2016-2021

Over the next five years we will build on past successes with our vision for a Living Landscape at the core of our work.

We have identified key species and habitats and look forward to working with partners and volunteers to help address challenges such as housing and infrastructure growth, as well as opportunities including the growing recognition of the value of the natural environment to society.

At a landscape-scale our Living Rivers Project will continue to work with landowners and volunteers to improve habitats and better understand the wildlife of our internationally significant chalk rivers. We will also be starting a major new project, Living Woods and Heaths, which will focus on these important and threatened habitats, that are home to some of our rarest species.





FOR WILDLIFE

To protect, enhance and connect places for wildlife on nature reserves, in urban areas and across the wider countryside through positive conservation action.

- 🔧 HMWT will stand up for wildlife, working in partnership to deliver real conservation outcomes.
- 🔧 An increase in the extent, quality and connectivity of wildlife habitats with our nature reserves at the core.
- 🔧 The recovery of threatened species, seeing the reversal of population declines.
- 🔧 Achieve a step change in our knowledge of habitats and species and enthusiasm for biological recording.
- 🔧 Seek a net gain in biodiversity from housing and infrastructure growth.

FOR PEOPLE

To inspire people to value the natural world and enable action for wildlife.

- 👤 Greater awareness and growing numbers of supporters for the Trust as the collective voice for wildlife.
- 👤 Active engagement with more volunteers and key decision-makers standing up for wildlife.
- 👤 Children have the chance to learn about, experience and value nature.
- 👤 Training to encourage and support new skills to help future conservation.
- 👤 Improved access to our nature reserves means more people visit and learn about wildlife.

A living landscape

Living Landscapes recognises that the best way of securing a future for wildlife is to work at a landscape scale.

Nature reserves and other protected areas are havens where diverse habitats support our precious native wildlife. Outside these, however, urban areas and the countryside can be barren, inhospitable places for wild animals and plants.

Our nature reserves are essential but we know that on their own they will not be enough to provide our wildlife with a secure future.

Our approach of promoting Living Landscapes is to show how nature can have a place beyond nature reserves. Valuable habitats can be created in the four most common land uses in our area – farmland, transport networks, towns and cities, and golf courses. We are already working with many partners to achieve this but there is much more that can be done.



Our nature reserves form part of this mosaic of our landscape-scale conservation work. They give protection for rare and threatened habitats and species and provide places where people can enjoy and learn about wildlife. Some of our reserves are among the best in the country to see certain wildlife, such as Amwell for wildfowl and Aldbury Nowers for butterflies.

“...nature is not a distraction from our interests as a country, but is essential for our health, wealth and security. **At a time of rising population, increased demand for resources and pressure on the land it is more vital than ever that this message is heard...**”

Tony Juniper, President of The Wildlife Trusts



Priority habitats and species

There are many vulnerable and important habitats in Hertfordshire and Middlesex including acid grassland and heathland, chalk grassland, chalk rivers, neutral grassland, oak-hornbeam woodland and wood pasture, parkland and orchards.

These priority habitats for 2016-2021 have been drawn from our Ecological Habitat Mapping work and national priority habitats and species and are where we can make the most difference. We will focus our conservation efforts here to improve and extend habitats and benefit the species that rely on them.

Seven flagship species reflect the variety and breadth of work of the Trust. They are also important in their own right and demonstrate the need for good quality, connected habitats. The **little ringed plover** is indicative of the loss and decline in quality of ephemeral gravel habitat. We will work to minimise this loss and create new habitat. Our work restoring chalk grassland at Aldbury Nowers and ancient woodland at Balls Wood has seen a resurgence in **small blue butterfly** and **white**

admiral butterfly numbers. We now need to maintain these habitats. In the case of **water voles** the numbers are beginning to recover thanks to work by the Trust, including the 2015 reintroduction at Thorley Wash. We will continue to encourage landowners to create bankside habitats. The well-known **hedgehog** numbers are in decline yet it represents the difference that individuals can make by gardening with wildlife in mind. Reliant upon woodland are the **song thrush** and the lesser-known **Barbastelle bat**. We will promote positive management for wildlife with woodland owners.



We aim to reverse the trend of people becoming less connected with nature and to inspire people to value and take action to protect the natural world. Numerous studies show the beneficial effects of time spent in nature. Our aim is to help people connect with wildlife to help increase happiness, health and wellbeing.

We rely on an army of enthusiastic volunteers who work on our reserves, help with wildlife surveys, support events, run our local groups and provide administrative support. Without these individuals giving their free time, the Trust simply would not be able to protect wildlife and wild places. We aim to encourage more people to volunteer their free time to help protect wildlife.



PATRICIA RAYNER





Our vision for a Living Landscape is only possible if we work together, so please contact us to get involved...

GET INVOLVED

MEMBERS

By becoming a member of Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust you are helping to maintain and restore important local wild places now and for future generations. Local groups offer members a chance to meet and enjoy events together.

LANDOWNERS AND MANAGERS

We would like to hear from farmers, golf course managers, schools, councils and anyone else who cares for land where they can make a difference for wildlife.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Trust's work. With your support we can significantly increase the amount we achieve for nature conservation.

BUSINESSES

We are keen to work with more businesses on projects that benefit communities and the environment. By working with us you can show that your company cares for nature and benefit your staff too.

To find out more contact us at info@hmwt.org or call 01727 858901.



Herts and
Middlesex

FIND OUT MORE LOOK ONLINE:

WWW.HERTSWILDLIFETRUST.ORG.UK

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust is a local charity supported by people who care about protecting wildlife, including over 21,000 members. With our network of volunteers, we manage a network of more than 40 nature reserves, covering nearly 2,000 acres.

Our natural environment faces ever-increasing long-term threats. Our role as your local Wildlife Trust is to maintain and restore the habitats that remain and to take action to protect local wildlife. We also aim to help people learn about and connect with the wildlife around them so that they can help to protect it for the future.

Find out more at www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk



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Printed on FSC stock:



Design and print by **TU ink** www.tuink.co.uk