



Herts and
Middlesex

Mid Herts Local Wildlife Group

News and events: April - September 2016



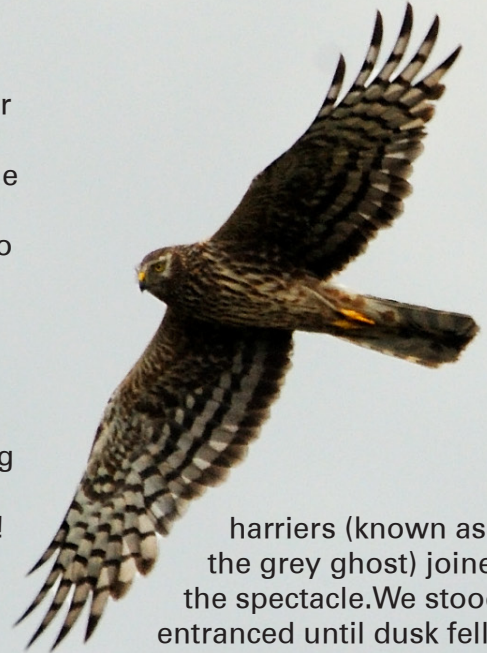
Welcome to our Spring/Summer newsletter and events sheet

STEVE WATERHOUSE

Ghostly happenings on the fen

In January, 15 of us embarked on the car share to Wicken Fen. An overcast but dry and chilly day enabled us to explore with our expert guide the trails and pathways of the fen. We learnt about the old ways of life on the fen, how the waters were controlled to support the reed bed enterprise and the enthralling history therein. We were able to see the restored electric pump station, the old cottage and the outhouses decked with the tools of the trade, together with some petrified wood that had been exhumed from the peat and the flat bottomed boat used to ride the narrow waterways. With several hides on the fen it was easy to sit and watch

and wait with bated breath for the evening spectacle of the roosting harriers we had come especially to see. During the day we had been privileged to see marsh harriers and barn owls over the reed beds. As dusk approached we all took up our positions; some in the hides, some out on the open fenland board walks, watching and waiting for the silent gliders. Then, what was that?! Looking again we saw the beautiful almost snow white shape of, yes, a male hen harrier against the gloomy backdrop of the darkening skies and, then, beyond our wildest dreams a female (known as ring tailed) also appeared in the sky; a pair, then 3 marsh



harriers (known as the grey ghost) joined the spectacle. We stood entranced until dusk fell and we could see no more. Quite a sight, and utterly breathtaking. With a quick dash to the cafe for a last drink we were happy to be on our return home; what a day!

Hertfordshire's rivers need you!

The Herts Riverflies Hub requires monitors to survey sites along its special chalk streams and help restore them to SSSI status. Full training given. If you can spare 3 hours a month please contact robin.cole@hotmail.com

FSC Guides

We now offer a variety of pictorial, pocket-sized plant and animal identification guides from the Field Studies Council (including one for chalk streams). Come along to one of our walks or coach trips and purchase them for £4 each or hire one for the day for £1.



MARGARET HOLLAND

Green Welly Gym

Wildlife gardening on a big scale! We hold practical reserve management parties on Sunday mornings throughout mid Herts. Tools, hot drinks and biscuits provided. If you would like to contribute to this very enjoyable and vital part of local conservation please contact the organisers for more details. **Tewinbury Reserve** - Every 4th Sunday of the month from September to April inclusive. Contact Robin Cole 01438 813403 home Mob: 07814524928. Also at **Amwell, Lemsford Springs, Tewin Orchard** and **Stanborough Reedmarsh** contact the Trust on 01727 858 901 or email volunteering@hmwt.org for further information about volunteering with the Trust.

Mid-Herts Local Wildlife Group Events - April - September 2016

Venue for all indoor evening events: Howlands Baptist Church, The Commons, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 4RS. Adjacent to Commonswood School. Donations: £4 for indoor and outdoor events unless otherwise stated. Families welcome. Please check for pushchair and wheelchair accessibility at outdoor events. Contact: Neale Holmes-Smith 01707324313 or Penny Fanthorpe 07761712245 penny.fanthorpe@ntlworld.com

Tuesday 12th April - Woodland Wild Flower Walk, Mardley Heath Local Nature Reserve, Woolmer Green

Meet 6.30pm in car park on Heath Road off B197, Woolmer Green. TL184248

Sunday 24th April - Seven Bluebell Woods Walk, Ayot Green

Meet 10am in Ayot Greenway car park, go north along Ayot St Peter Rd through Ayot Green, towards its junction with Ayot Little Green Lane, car park is on your right for Ayot Greenway. TL144222. Walk is 3-4 miles.

Sunday 15th May - Site visit to HMWT Ashwell Quarry & Quarry Springs Reserve

Following her February presentation Chris James will walk us round this beautiful site. Meet at 2pm. Park in field a short distance from the reserve entrance in Love Lane junction with Hinxworth Road, Ashwell. SG7 5HX. TL253395. Stout shoes recommended as ground can be uneven.

Tuesday 24th May - Barn Owls and Cuckoos at Ellenbrook Fields Reserve, Hatfield

Meet at 6.45pm in the crescent area off Oaklands Lane, Smallford, opposite the Rugby Club TL193080

Sunday 12th June - Tree Identification walk in Bramfield Woods

Meet 10am in Bramfield in the car park opposite the Grandison Pub in Bury Lane. TL157290. Walk is 4-5 miles. FSC Tree ID guides available.

Saturday 25th June - Oxhey Wildlife Gardens near Watford

Guided tour of at least 3 gardens by Rob Hopkins, HMWT Reserves Office followed by tea and cakes. Meet at 2pm. Parking in lower Paddock Road by Oxhey Green. Limited places available. Booking essential contact Neale Holmes-Smith on 01707 324313.

Tuesday 28th June - Birds, Bats and Orchids at Tewinbury Reserve

Meet in the Tewinbury Reserve car park at 7pm for a multi-activity evening. Off B1000 north of Welwyn Garden City. Turn right at Tewinbury Farm Hotel sign. Park on right in 100m. Bring bat detectors and a large torch.

Tuesday 12th July - Mid Herts Local Group AGM

A short walk at Monks Green Farm which is wildlife friendly and set in wonderful countryside. The AGM proceedings and pub meal (£5.00) will follow at the Farmers Boy Brickendon Green (if veg meal required contact Penny). Following this we will visit Highfield Woods for owls and other nocturnal wildlife. Meet 6.30pm outside Simon Balle School, Mangrove Rd, Hertford, SG13 8AJ, where you will be taken to farm car park.



Sunday 24th July - Thorley

Wash HMWT Reserve, Spellbook near

Sawbridgeworth. Newly restored wetland reserve where over 150 water voles were released in 2015. Meet at 10am in the Three Horseshoes car park Spellbrook on the A1184 Sawbridgeworth/Bishop Stortford Road TL175487. Walk 2 miles.

Saturday 10th September - Grasshoppers, spiders, shieldbugs and more at The Commons Local Nature Reserve, Welwyn Garden City

Meet at 9:45am by Howlands Baptist Church, AL7 4RS. A meadow bug hunt with Rory Dimond from Buglife, to look for Commonswood's nine species of Grasshopper and Cricket and the impressive Wasp Spider. Also, a 1 hour guided walk around the reserve with Chairman Glyn Dimond encompassing Commonswood's ancient history, varied habitats and the work of Commonswood Nature Watch to maintain them, including a rare example of fenland in Hertfordshire. Please bring sturdy footwear suitable for muddy conditions and cameras with macro facilities to the bug hunt. This event is not wheelchair accessible and there are no WC facilities. Booking essential with Penny as numbers are limited: penny.fanthorpe@ntlworld.com

Tuesday 27th September - Chiltern Chalk and Witch Elm

An illustrated talk by Naomi Stevenson, advisor for Natural England about the distinctive landscapes and wildlife within Hertfordshire. 8pm at Howlands Baptist Church.

