

Brilliant butterflies

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your garden
butterfly-friendly **8**

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WORLD**
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reserve in Broxbourne
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NEW!
**BEEKEEPING
COURSE**
see page 2 for
details

Introduction to **beekeeping** workshop

**BOOKING
ESSENTIAL**
£55 per person
including
lunch

JOHN SEVERNS

Sunday 7 May

10:00am-3:00pm Tewin Orchard

An introduction to beekeeping with professional beekeeper Hannah Reeves.

This one day workshop will give you an overview of the craft of beekeeping. You will spend the morning of the five hour course learning the basic theory of beekeeping, including the equipment used and the role of the beekeeper.

After lunch, you will spend the afternoon in the orchard trying out your new knowledge in a session of practical beekeeping. The day will finish with the tasting of a delicious local honey selection.

This course is suitable for beginners and protective beekeeping suits and gloves will be provided.

Book online at
www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk



About your tutor

Hannah Reeves first gained an interest in bees when working as a field assistant at Rothamsted Research. She then went on to collect her first swarm and start keeping her own bees. Her university dissertation was on a comparison between urban and rural beekeeping. She currently works full-time as a beekeeper, having completed a three year bee farming apprenticeship with the Bee Farmer's Association.





Spring 2017

Herts and
Middlesex

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wildlifematters

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From the Chief Executive



Welcome to the spring edition of *Wildlife Matters*.

The last winter has been a very busy time again for our Reserves Team and volunteers with a full programme

of conservation tasks such as woodland management and reedbed cutting which are vital for good habitat management. With the arrival of spring it is a great time to get out and enjoy the results of this hard work so do visit our reserves and come along to our Go Wild events.

Recently we were delighted to welcome Louise Sleeman, the Trust's new People and Wildlife Officer, covering Stocker's Lake, Springwell Reedbed and Hilfield Reservoir as part of our partnership with Affinity Water. Louise will be encouraging local communities to learn more about wildlife and how they can support their local nature reserves.

Our reserves are only part of the picture of nature conservation across our area; gardens can be a beautiful haven for wildlife and in this edition of *Wildlife Matters* we have some fantastic tips for making your garden wildlife-friendly. We are making great improvements to our own wildlife garden at Grebe House in St Albans with the help of dedicated volunteers and we look forward to welcoming you there later in the year. We're looking forward to another year of working with our members, volunteers and partners to protect wildlife across Hertfordshire and Middlesex. Thank you for your interest and support.

Lesley Davies

Spotlight on the Trust



Simon Barnes at Lemsford Springs with HMWT's Tim Hill and Tom Day

We've had lots of opportunity to show off the wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex this winter with the BBC *Inside Out* team visiting us not once, but twice! You may have caught our Conservation Manager, Tim Hill, speaking to presenter, Mike Dilger, about the impact that High Speed Two will have on our Broadwater Lake Nature Reserve. The piece was impactful and gave us a great opportunity to highlight our HS2 campaign.

The start of the year once again brought the BBC *Inside Out* team to our area, this time to Tarmac's Panshanger Park in Hertford to speak with our

Water Vole Conservation Officer, Martin Ketcher, and local photographer, Russell Savory, about our local voles' behaviour. The piece is scheduled to go out in early spring.

Lastly, Simon Barnes, *The Times* journalist, visited our Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve with Tim Hill and Tom Day, Head of Living Landscapes, where the group were lucky enough to spot Jack snipe and green sandpipers among other wildlife. Simon had a great day and wrote an article for *The Sunday Times Magazine* (published 12th February) on how the Trust's use of habitat mapping is being used to successfully inform local conservation.

St Albans wildlife garden growing with the help of local charities

The wildlife garden in Verulamium Park is improving thanks to our new partnership with local homeless charity, Emmaus, and HACRO – an organisation that assists ex-offenders. HACRO and Emmaus will provide a team of green-fingered service users for weekly gardening work parties.

The garden, which is outside of our Grebe House office in Verulamium Park, was extended last year with help from the Tesco 'Bags of Help' scheme. The new section of the garden will be created from scratch and feature plants that support birds and pollinators.

The wildlife garden is open to visit Monday - Friday, 10am-5pm. The extension to the garden will be opening to visitors in summer 2017.



Go Wild Volunteers

We are delighted to announce that we have been successful in securing funding for our Go Wild Volunteer project! Thanks to all of our supporters' votes for us in the Aviva Community Fund we can now push forward and recruit volunteers passionate about nature and our reserves. Volunteers will be professionally trained to take their knowledge and communicate it effectively to engage members of the public with wildlife and nature. If you would be interested in receiving training and leading walks or attending community events on behalf of the Trust please email emma.matthars@hmw.t.org



Trust runs free river habitat workshops



Trust welcomes new People and Wildlife Officer

We're working with Affinity Water on a long-term project to improve important habitat for wildlife and increase community engagement around the Trust's reserves at Stocker's Lake, Springwell Reedbed and Hilfield Park Reservoir.

The reserves, which are owned by Affinity Water and managed by the Trust, lies at the northern end of the Colne Valley Regional Park and is a significant habitat for wetland birds. Stocker's Lake boasts the largest heron roost in the county and wintering ducks such as shoveler and goldeneye are common visitors in nationally important numbers. Over 60 species of breeding birds have been recorded here.

The project will see a programme



Louise Sleeman

of habitat restoration and improvement works. Louise Sleeman, the Trust's new People and Wildlife Officer, will oversee community engagement work and encourage

those living near the reserves to learn more about their local wildlife and provide volunteering opportunities.



Emmaus and HACRO volunteers in our wildlife garden



Last month, our Living Rivers Officer, David Johnson, ran a series of free workshops to give people in Hertfordshire and Middlesex the opportunity to learn the skills to carry out river habitat enhancement work.

The one day workshop taught attendees about the different tools and techniques needed to improve river habitat, with a specific focus on the skills associated with installing woody debris features such as deflectors and brash berms.

The workshop was aimed at anyone working on rivers so that they could gain the knowledge and techniques to be able to replicate what they learned on the day to improve rivers elsewhere.



Green groups unite

Following the vote to leave the EU, environmental organisations are asking Government to keep the EU's existing protections, and build on them

FARMING

KEEP

Controls on pollution of our rivers, soils and seas



NICHOLAS WATTS

ENVIRONMENT

KEEP

Protection for important wildlife sites



MATTHEW ROBERTS

INTRODUCE

Investment to restore our soils, rivers and countryside to full ecological health



MATTHEW ROBERTS

INTRODUCE

A world-leading Environment Act, and map nature's recovery



UK PARLIAMENT/JESSICA TAYLOR

Thirteen major environmental organisations including The Wildlife Trusts have formed a new coalition called Greener UK. Their aim is twofold: first, to ensure that wildlife's fortunes improve when we leave the EU; and second, to persuade the UK's Governments to seize this moment and lead the world in nature's recovery.

The 13 organisations in the coalition speak for almost eight million members – but many more people support the coalition's objectives. In a recent YouGov poll, eight out of ten British adults thought we needed the same or stronger levels of environmental protection after we leave the EU.

"This coalition is powerful because its moment has come," says Stephanie Hilborne, Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts. "If these islands are to change fundamentally, let's make that change a good one."

Greener UK is concerned that wildlife could be forgotten in the rush to attract new investment or make new trade deals. This might reduce the protection we give our most important wildlife sites, or the vigour with which we control pollution.

The coalition is calling on the UK Government to keep as much of the EU's environmental protection as possible when we leave, and uphold it into the future. It is also asking for sustainable and effective farming and fisheries policies, underpinned by safeguards for important wildlife sites and species, pollution control, and marine protection.

The Wildlife Trusts are asking Government to:

- Bring in a world-leading Environment Act and map nature's recovery;
- Invest public money in restoring our soils, rivers and countryside to full ecological health;
- Complete the UK's network of Marine Protected Areas and ensure we fish sustainably.

"We have secured real, tangible and positive change in the past and are determined to do so again," says Stephanie Hilborne. "The people of the UK want their wildlife back. Now is the time to call for that, on behalf of this generation and the next."

Eight out of ten adults think we need the same or more environmental protection

for nature

FISHERIES

KEEP

Momentum on banning discards and moving to sustainable fishing

FISHFIGHT.NET

INTRODUCE

More protection for vulnerable habitats, and let fish stocks recover

PAUL NAYLOR

Who are the Greener UK coalition?

Greener UK is a group of 13 environmental organisations representing almost eight million people. It includes The Wildlife Trusts, the National Trust and the RSPB. All of them say that leaving the EU is the moment to restore and enhance the UK's environment. More on wildlifetrusts.org/Greener-UK

DAVID CHAPMAN



180 MPs AND COUNTING

In the last issue we asked every MP to sign a pledge to help make the UK a world leader on environmental protection and climate change, and restore nature. See who signed at green-alliance.org.uk/GreenerUK

Bumper first year for Alderney Bird Observatory



The island's gannet colony with – a sign of the times – nests made from discarded fishing nets

The Alderney Bird Observatory, set up in March 2016 as part of the Alderney Wildlife Trust, has ringed 13,000 birds and recorded 180 species, five of them new to the island. This has already shown how important Alderney is as a stop-over point for migrant birds.

The first year's work is a testament to the observatory's warden John Horton and his team, who ringed 500 storm petrels and 777 gannets. Their work will allow better monitoring of the population size and trends of Alderney's birds.

ALDERNEY BIRD OBSERVATORY

Pine martens back in Shropshire

Shropshire Wildlife Trust are supporting what may be the only breeding population of pine martens in England.

The animals were first observed on a trail camera, and thought to be migrants from Wales passing through. Subsequent monitoring revealed a small population in the woodlands of the Clun Valley.

Several woodland owners in the Valley have already agreed to manage their land with pine martens in mind and are working with the Trust to install over 100 den boxes. Local volunteers are helping with scat searches to further monitor the animals.

With improved denning options, the Trust thinks the martens can become fully established in Shropshire. More on shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/pinemartenproject

TERRY WHITTAKER 2020 VISION



Pine martens have been absent from most of England for more than a century



Helping garden butterflies

Butterflies are some of our most attractive and easy to identify insects but are under threat.

Butterflies are also important pollinators and a source of food for birds, dragonflies and spiders. The more we can do to encourage them, the healthier the whole environment will be.

In his recent book, *Butterflies of Hertfordshire and Middlesex*, Andrew Wood has compiled a comprehensive guide to the butterflies found in Hertfordshire and Middlesex, including their status, history, ecology and conservation needs. Here, Andrew looks at the importance of gardens for butterflies...



ANDREW WOOD

Large white larva

Large white



ANDREW WOOD

An individual garden may seem small and not especially important as a wildlife site but once you consider all the gardens down a street and all the gardens backing on to them in the next street, you start to see a bigger picture emerging. Even more importantly they can form a green corridor that links the countryside, parks, cemeteries or churchyards together. So what can you do to make your garden an even better place for butterflies?

Adult butterflies need food, such as nectar, and shelter at night and from bad weather. Caterpillars also need food plants. What a butterfly will not find attractive is a garden that is dominated by decking, paving or closely mown weed-killed grass or a garden that has been converted into a parking space.

Lets look at some plants that are easy to grow and attract butterflies:

Marjoram: This herb is great for cooking and is a magnet for the attractive gatekeeper.

Honesty: This plant flowers purple in the spring followed by oval seed pods. The orange tip and green-veined white are attracted to its flowers and will also lay their eggs on the plant. The orange tip's orange eggs are easy to find at the base of the flower and the silvery-green caterpillars can be found eating the green seed pods.

Nasturtium: Trailing across the ground this orange-flowered annual has flowers and leaves that both we and the large white will eat. Despite its notoriety as a "cabbage white" it is an attractive butterfly. The caterpillars live communally and are easy to find.

es



Brimstone

Red
admiral



PAUL THURSH

caterpillars feed on the flower buds.

Several species of butterfly have caterpillars that eat stinging nettles, but as they generally need large patches of fresh nettles in full sunshine, it is not really worth

trying to cultivate such a patch in all but the largest gardens. Many of the brown and skipper species have caterpillars that feed on common grasses, but again you need an area rather larger than most gardens would support, or most

gardeners would want to cultivate. Trying to get such areas in local parks is probably much more likely to encourage breeding than trying to create pocket patches in your garden.

However, many of these species will visit the garden as adults if you provide the nectar sources. In the spring, fruit tree blossom is attractive as is the rotting fruit in the autumn. Through the summer and autumn, marigolds Michaelmas daisies, buddleia, blackberry, hemp agrimony and lavender will all attract butterflies to their flowers. Common weeds such as dandelions are not what you might want to encourage but their flowers are also attractive to butterflies.

Whether your garden is big or small, you can help attract butterflies by providing them with the right habitat. You can get further advice from Butterfly Conservation, the national charity devoted to saving butterflies and moths – butterfly-conservation.org – and its local branch in Hertfordshire and Middlesex – hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk



Peacock

Alder Buckthorn: This is a small shrub, but importantly it is one of the caterpillar foodplants for the brimstone butterfly which will lay its eggs on the leaves where you will hopefully be able watch the caterpillar's growth.

Ivy: Many gardeners are unhappy to find ivy growing up a fence or wall but it has many uses for butterflies. The adult brimstone will use its shelter to hibernate through the winter. The flowers are one of the best nectar sources in the autumn and will attract many species, particularly the red admiral and comma. Dozens of red admirals will gorge themselves on the flowers, especially if they are in a sunny and sheltered position. The first brood of the holly blue butterfly lays its eggs on ivy and the hatched

Andrew's book
Butterflies of Hertfordshire and Middlesex is available from Hertfordshire Natural History Society at for **only £19.99** at hnhs.org





My Wild Life

Zephaniah Lindo, Horticulture and Landscaping Lecturer at Enfield's Capel Manor and Gardeners' World presenter, tells Charlotte Hussey, the Trust's Communication Officer, what got him passionate about gardens and how he is getting other people excited too!

What does the role of lecturer at Capel Manor College involve?

I teach college aged students, some of who I am introducing to gardens and wildlife for the first time as they live on urban estates and have never had a garden; they know that there is a 'great outdoors' but don't know how to access it – or that it needs to be managed.

On the other end of the scale I also teach older students, ranging from 25 to 60. These individuals are often highly focussed on ecological change,

protection and conservation; the majority have a garden and want it to look beautiful while still being of value to the environment.

To both these groups I have a responsibility to promote good management of the environment, rather than simply focusing on the aesthetic. To own a garden is to own a tiny piece of the planet and it's amazing how quickly good management can spread through the community and create something really special.



CHARLOTTE HUSSEY

CHARLOTTE HUSSEY

RACHEL SCOPES

One of your jobs before becoming a lecturer was a gardener – what to you is so special about gardening that drove you to where you are now?

On a sunny day why wouldn't you want to be outside every day? To me even the days where everything goes wrong and it rains are still better than a normal day in an office. People work all year to have just two weeks outside relaxing – that's my day every day – the great outdoors is my office. It's that old saying "choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life" and it's so true. We all need a connection with the soil, with animals; it gives a sense of wellbeing and makes balancing the pressures of modern living much easier – being in nature is a fundamental need. This sort of job also gives a lot of satisfaction, you can work all day and really see the impact you are having.

We encourage people to garden with wildlife in mind – do you have any tips around this?

Understand that the number one thing you can do is look after your soil. Managing soil and ensuring that it's healthy will give you a solid foundation on which to build the rest of your garden. It is the basis of the food chain for both us and other animals. If you have healthy soil then the rest will take care of itself – don't and you can plant the best flowers but they won't thrive. You can do this by mulching and composting (using your own compost so that you are putting locally removed nutrients back into the ground and not forcing a new recipe on nature).

Secondly, don't be too tidy. Wildlife won't thrive in a perfectly manicured garden. Remember that nature is a living thing, don't try and control it so much.

And finally – don't be picky with nature! Too many people want to attract only a certain type of wildlife but it's all part of the food chain and everything has a place in the garden. If you want nice aphid eating wildlife then accept that you need aphids present. Allow nature to balance itself and don't be too precious. Remember that we've borrowed from nature in the first place and it knows how to look after itself!



🐞 Ladybird

What would your advice be to people wanting to work outside in nature?

Go for it – just do it! Some days will be rainy and miserable but not every day and the good days vastly outweigh the bad. You will meet interesting and passionate people, you will learn science, history, ecology, conservation, design, art and practical conservation skills. The work is varied – no two days will ever be the same. Even if you are weeding a border you will see a result for your hard work and have job satisfaction.

A lot of young people are concerned with being famous and leaving a mark – there is no better way of leaving a mark than making a little bit of the planet a more beautiful place.

Lastly, go and get training so you can go into the industry with some understanding gained from an apprenticeship or course. If you don't have the time then even a couple of hours of volunteering will be of huge benefit. Once you start, you'll catch the bug – you might not want to turn it into a career but you'll have a lifelong passion.

Do you have a particular highlight in your gardening career?

A real highlight is seeing students who come in interested in the subject and then, with training, turn into successful gardeners. Seeing my students and

gardens thrive is a reward I get every day.

Other highlights of my career would be my medal winning show gardens at Chelsea Flower Show and being invited to present on BBC Gardeners' World – funnily enough when I first came to Capel Manor as a student I was asked where I'd like to be in the future and flippantly replied 'I want to present on *Gardeners' World*!'

And lastly what is your best wildlife spot?

I have wanted to see a kingfisher for the last 30 odd years and finally I saw one on a canal in Berkhamstead recently! The Butterfly Ball and Grasshopper's Feast was my favourite book as a child and the kingfisher illustration really captured my imagination so I was thrilled to finally spot one!

My mum's garden in St Albans was just a simple suburban 1920s terraced house but she turned half the garden into a pond which really encouraged wildlife. We had great crested newts and a whole range of other aquatic. She had a *Dracunculus vulgaris* – also known as the voodoo lily among other names – and this provided my inspiration for our piece in the Chelsea Flower Show.



JOSH KUBALE

» Kingfisher



Six tips to keep your

After a long, dark winter now is the time that your garden will start to spring back to life so it's a great time to start thinking about how you can make your garden more wildlife friendly. Whether your garden is big or small, here are our top tips on making it a haven for local wildlife.

1

Build a pond

During the past century nearly 70% of ponds have been lost from the UK countryside so including one in your garden can make a real difference to wildlife. Ponds are essential for amphibians like frogs and toads and offer a bath and drinking water for birds. Lots of invertebrates breed in water and birds and bats may feed from insects at the water's surface.

2

Wildlife homes

There are plenty of ways to provide a home for wildlife from bird and bat boxes to log piles, and enjoy seeing the likes of blue tits and robins raising their young. See page 22 for how to set up a bug hotel.

3

Choose the right plants

Ornamental plants such as buddleia, ice-plant, lavender and honeysuckle will attract butterflies, moths, bees and hoverflies but be sure to select the best, most nectar-rich varieties.



ROB HOPKINS

garden wildlife friendly



4

Don't tidy up over autumn

Uncut seed heads will provide a tasty treat for seed eating birds, while plant stems, dead leaves and winter weeds are a great place for insects to shelter! It may look messy to some, but a busy, untouched garden is a haven for wildlife. So if you want a healthy, wildlife friendly garden, put your feet up and let nature do its thing until spring!

5

Create a wildlife corridor

Make sure that your garden is accessible to animals that wouldn't be able to get in otherwise – you would be surprised how much extra habitat can open up for wildlife with a few small holes in fences at ground level! Hedgehogs particularly benefit from this so consider including log piles or a hedgehog home in your garden too!

6

Feed the birds

Natural food sources become very scarce during winter so putting food out in your garden can really help our feathered friends.

Birds can be fed year round with spring being a great time to help successful breeding and the rearing of young. Summer is a time when younger birds benefit from easy food sources and adult birds need extra energy as they moult. Winter is when birds are most vulnerable due to the scarcity of food and the cold so feeding is crucial – high calorie food such as sunflower hearts are most beneficial – all birds love them.

Vine House Farms do a great range of bird food and they donate 5% of their takings to The Wildlife Trusts. You can find out more or buy food here: www.vinehousefarm.co.uk



THANK YOU

One of our life members, **Peter King**, very kindly left a legacy to the Trust. It was very thoughtful of him to have remembered the Trust in this special way and we are very grateful for all the support he has given to the Trust over the years, making such a valuable contribution to our conservation work.

Thank you for the kind donations the Trust received in memory of **Thomas Kittle, Rose Chamberlin and Bob Hutton**. These gifts will help us continue our work protecting the rich heritage of habitats and wildlife across the two counties ensuring their memories live on, providing a healthy, vibrant and diverse natural world for future generations to enjoy.

Our thanks and condolences go to all family and friends of Peter, Thomas, Rose and Bob. Legacies and donations made in this memorable way make a valuable contribution to our work by safeguarding local wildlife and their habitats, thank you.



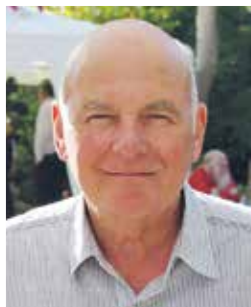
STAYING IN TOUCH

Do we have your email address?

Email is a cost effective way for us to keep in touch with you. If you have an email address and you are happy for us to communicate with you we would love to send you the Trust's e-newsletter and other updates.

Gift Aid

Gift Aiding your membership and other donations means we reclaim your tax – at least 25p for every £1 you give us. If you are eligible for Gift Aid, or your tax circumstances change, please let us know by contacting membership@hmwt.org *giftaid it*



In memory of wildlife enthusiast: **Bob Hutton**

Bob was born in 1941 in Daventry, but shortly returned with his mother to Shoreditch

where he grew up in the bombed ruins of the East End. Bob's love of wildlife began from a very young age; he took great pleasure in observing all his surroundings, often taking in sick and injured animals to look after them.

Bob's particular wildlife passion were birds; one of his favourite things to do was to sit and relax in his garden and watch all the wild birds that visited. He very much enjoyed sharing his love of nature with his family, spending much of their time together in the countryside and visiting country fairs, where he loved talking to his children and grandchildren all about local wildlife.

Bob will be sadly missed by his family and friends, but he leaves a lasting legacy: his love of wildlife will live on through the passion for nature he has passed onto his grandchildren and through the kind donations made to the Trust in his memory.

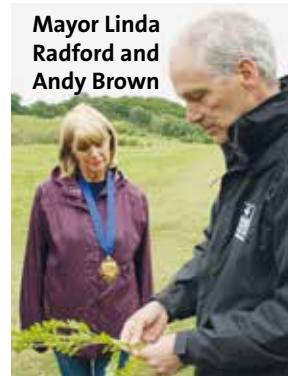
The Mayor of Hertford's Charity Quiz Night

Our thanks to the Mayor of Hertford, Dr Linda Radford, for choosing Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust as one of her two selected charities to benefit from the Mayor of Hertford's Appeal Fund during her term of office.

Over the course of the past year, the Mayor has kindly hosted a number of fundraising activities and events to raise awareness and donations for each charity. A team from the Trust even went along to the Charity Quiz Night in January.

Thank you to the Mayor of Hertford for supporting us.

Mayor Linda Radford and Andy Brown



CHARLOTTE HUSSEY



Wild Days

Make room for nature this June – no matter where you are or how busy your life! When you sign up to the challenge, we'll send you a pack full of

ideas, encouragement and Random Acts of Wildness. You'll also receive a wallchart to track your progress, a wild badge, and regular blasts of inspiration throughout June to help you make nature part of your life.

What is a Random Act of Wildness?

A Random Act of Wildness is anything

that you can do in an average working day to bring a little nature into your life. They can take a few seconds, a few minutes, or if you lose yourself completely, a few hours! Sign up at mywildlife.org.uk/30dayswild



Volunteer Awards

In October the Trust said a big thank you to all of its hard-working volunteers at an event in Tewin. In 2015-16, volunteers worked over 10,000 hours in support of local wildlife. Jon Fish, West Herts volunteer, and office volunteer Carol Newman were presented volunteer awards for their hard work and dedication to the Trust.

Keeping our supporters safe

You may have noticed recent national press coverage highlighting issues around charity fundraising and suggested improvements to its regulation and governance. Here at HMWT we are keeping a close eye on these developments to ensure we continue to work well within regulations and best practice in this area. We are proud to be a member of the Institute of Fundraising and registered with the new Fundraising Regulator. We therefore follow the Code of Fundraising Practice and have signed up to the Fundraising Promise, outlining our commitment to ensure our fundraising activities are legal, open, honest and respectful. You can see full details of our Fundraising Promise on our website.

Membership rates increase

The work of the Trust is largely funded by subscriptions from members. However, the cost of developing and delivering our day-to-day conservation and public engagement activities has increased considerably in the last three years and is expected to continue to do so. The Trust will therefore be increasing the minimum membership subscription rates for single and joint memberships by a small amount from April 2017. Family memberships will see no change. The majority of our members already pay above the minimum subscription rate and will be unaffected, but those that are will be contacted directly before the change comes into effect. We are hugely grateful to all our members for the support you give through your regular donations and we look forward to continuing to work with you for the benefit for our local wildlife.

Where The Wild Things Are

Are you interested in how your local wildlife is faring? Finding out answers to questions such as 'What's so special about chalk streams?', 'Why do species and habitats need protecting?', 'What conservation projects happen near you?', and 'How you can help protect your natural heritage?'

The Trust has just launched our new and updated community talk, *Where The Wild Things Are*, which discusses these questions, conservation for the 21st century and the work



of the Trust. We have a team of excellent volunteer community speakers eager to visit and deliver these popular talks to community groups across Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

Are you part of a community group that would like to learn more about your local wildlife? If so, this is the talk for you! For more information on how to book and find out *Where The Wild Things Are*, please visit: hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/talks, contact Wendy Hartnell on communitytalks@hmwt.org or call 01727 858901.

Are you an experienced public speaker?

We are currently recruiting volunteer speakers to deliver our wildlife talk to community groups in North, South and West Hertfordshire. If you're passionate about local wildlife and interested in volunteering your time with HMWT, please visit our website at hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteeropps for more details on how to apply.

We'd love to hear from you.
Get in touch with us at
membership@hmwt.org



Working for wildlife

Local businesses show their support for wildlife

The Grove

We went to see our newest Gold corporate member, Watford-based hotel, spa and golf resort The Grove, to present staff members with their Corporate Membership certificate. The Trust has some exciting things planned with The Grove this year – watch this space!



Natasha Geldenhuys, David Roberts, Michael Helling, Mike Master, Sarah Rutherford and Nico Geldenhuys

Johnson Matthey

We were pleased to visit North Hertfordshire company, Johnson Matthey, that will be continuing its vital support for local wildlife as they continue their Gold corporate membership of the Trust. Staff are delighted to have a couple of our sites right on their doorstep – we look forward to taking the company's staff out to see the Pasque flowers at Therfield Heath this spring.



Max Finney, Deborah McGarrity, Mike Master and John Gourd



Bertie with Sarah Rutherford, Val Fowler and Tom Perry

John Lewis

The Wildlife Trusts were delighted to be John Lewis' charity campaign partner at the end of last year. We hope you all got to see its 2016 Christmas advert which celebrated the joy of wild encounters and featured some well-loved British wildlife species. These special visitors to 'Buster's Garden' were also made into a collection of cuddly toys from which 10% of sales were kindly donated to The Wildlife Trusts.

Our very own Bertie the Badger even had the chance to visit our local Hertfordshire stores before Christmas, in Welwyn Garden City

and Watford, to help spread some Christmas spirit and promote the partnership.

Local branches

John Lewis Welwyn: The Trust was nominated for John Lewis' Community Matters charitable giving scheme from August to October last year, from which we received £900 – and a giant cheque too!

John Lewis Watford: Beauty students from West Herts College attended the My John Lewis account holder event in December to give customers mini manicures raising donations of £100!

Conservation volunteering

The support the Trust receives from teams of staff from local businesses on our nature reserves is amazing. We've had teams from Bourne Leisure and UK Power Networks, both Platinum corporate members of the Trust, working for wildlife across Hertfordshire in the autumn.

While staff from the popular holiday company helped with some much-needed scrub clearance at Long Deans, on the same day over at Tewin Orchard, staff from the power company helped with our annual fruit picking, which by all accounts was hugely successful.

"The UKPN team did a fantastic job! All the fruit you picked was taken straight the presser and made into juice, which went down a storm at our Apple Day event and sold out completely!" – Laura, Senior Reserves Officer

Staff from both teams gave us great enthusiasm, commitment and hours of, hard work which has made a real contribution to the amount of habitat management work we have been able to achieve for local wildlife, thank you.

Visit hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/workparty to organise a Working for Wildlife Day for your business team. Alternatively, contact Sarah Rutherford on 01727 858901 ext. 242 or email sarah.rutherford@hmtw.org to discuss your requirements.



White Admiral appeal update

White admiral butterflies are spreading their wings once again in Herts and Middlesex



TONY COX



The support you have given to our recent fundraising appeal is making a very real, immediate difference to our white admiral butterflies, thank you.

Once a common sight across the two counties, these spectacular woodland butterflies have really suffered over the last 20 years with white admiral populations heavily impacted by the decline of their ancient woodland homes. Thankfully, with the help of our members, volunteers and partners, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has been determinedly restoring the important woodland habitats they rely on locally for food and shelter. Collectively, our efforts have seen a resurgence of this spectacular butterfly. But as you know, we needed additional funding to achieve even more.

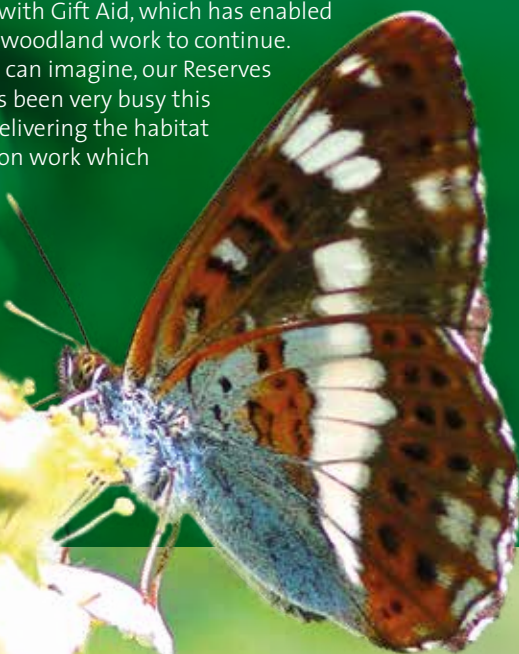
Your generous support to our white admiral appeal over the past few months has raised nearly £10,000 with Gift Aid, which has enabled our vital woodland work to continue.

As you can imagine, our Reserves Team has been very busy this winter, delivering the habitat restoration work which

will benefit our white admiral butterflies and many other local woodland species for years to come. We have managed to open up the pathways and clear large openings on our woodland reserves, including Longspring Wood and Gobions Wood, the result of which means more sunlight will be able to stream into the woodland floor which will in time allow many nectar-rich plants to flourish.

At Gobions Wood we've coppiced 40m of old, over-mature hawthorn hedge along the woodland edge and replanted gaps with mixed hedgerow species, and at Hilfield Park Reservoir we've coppiced along the woodland rides and layered blackthorn scrub. These changes will improve, lengthen and diversify woodland-edge habitats, which will accommodate a greater range of wildlife species and support the white admiral throughout its lifecycle. We've also cleared holly at Fir & Pond Woods, conducted woodland thinning at Danemead, coppiced hazel at Old Park Wood and completed more glade creation work at Cassiobury Park, all to help improve the light levels and control the spread of invasive plants in our local woodlands. Additionally the appeal has also raised the funds needed to cover the ongoing training and surveying costs for our Reserve Officers and volunteers to monitor white admiral populations and effectively manage our woodland sites to provide these iconic butterflies with all that they need to flourish.

Thank you to everyone who has kindly donated to this appeal. You have given the white admiral the opportunity to once again become well established in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.



PETE ROSE



Danemead

Danemead Nature Reserve is an area of **important oak hornbeam woodland** where **broad-leaved helleborines and butterflies thrive**. **A reserve surrounded by history**, this site is a **wonderful area of wood pasture that forms part of Broxbourne Woods**.

History

Danemead is surrounded by rich history and archeology – the site is bounded by Ermine Street and by the north end of Martin's Green. Ermine Street was a major Roman Road that ran from London to Lincoln and York. The Old English name was *Earninga Straete*, so named after a tribe called the Earningas, who inhabited land around Royston. If you park in Martin Green's car park, you can walk a short way down Ermine Street to access the reserve on the left.

Wood Pasture

Europe has historically managed land using a wood pasture system – open woodland would provide shelter and forage for grazing animals, as well as woodland products. Danemead is a fine example of this in Hertfordshire. Broxbourne Woods, of which Danemead is a part, was largely managed in this way before around 1963. This large area was dominated by many large old hornbeam and some oak pollards, with extensive areas of bracken and birch/willow scrub. The pollards were historically cut for fuel by local firewood

merchants. Sadly most of this large complex was destroyed for conifer plantation in the mid-1960 and the reserve is one of the few remnants that survive.

Meadow

There is a meadow at the centre of the reserve which is typical of wood pasture, as grazing and tree management opened up areas of the woodland. Habitat such as this with open grassland in close proximity to woodland provides high botanical diversity and provides great habitat for invertebrates. Butterflies are abundant in the summer and benefit from large open sunny areas which are still close to food plants and shelter of the woodland edge.

The damp meadow supports a rich variety of wildflowers, including meadowsweet and devil's-bit scabious. Meadowsweet is a member of the rose family that favours wet habitats such as ditches, damp meadows and



⚡ Devil's-bit scabious



⚡ Meadowsweet

riverbanks. From June to September, meadowsweet produces spays of tiny creamy-white flowers standing atop tall stems. Devil's-bit scabious is much prettier than its name would suggest, with rounded, nodding purple-blue flower heads. It blooms between July and October, its pincushion-like flower heads attracting a wide variety of butterflies and bees.

Grazing

It is harder to maintain open wood pasture nowadays due to the decline in traditional farming methods. However, the Trust works hard to maintain the site, grazing it using red poll cattle every year for two months from mid-July.

The red polls are a gentle, hardy breed of cattle who are not picky and happily browse on Danemead's varied grassland.

Reserves Roundup

Amwell – Scrub has been removed from the reed beds and a mix of hedgerow species have been planted near the James hide. The konik ponies have also been grazing at the reserve over winter.

Fox Covert – The paths around the reserve have been edged using felled sycamore in order to help protect the



⚡ White Helleborine

white helleborines which will be flowering in May and June.

Stocker's Lake and Hilfield Park Reservoir – We have been carrying out important winter habitat work at Stocker's Lake and Hilfield Reservoir including coppicing trees and scrub clearance.

Lemsford Springs – The Tesco Bags of Help at Lemsford is almost complete; we have



⚡ Danemead hornbeams

⚡ Purple emperor



Last year we received funding from the Veolia Environmental Trust to install new fencing on the reserve for grazing sheep, so that we could reintroduce cattle and ensure robust fencing around the reserve.

Wildlife

Danemead attracts a large array of butterflies including the white admiral and purple emperor. The white admiral is a distinctive woodland butterfly with a striking white band across its black wings.

The white admiral can be found in

shady woodlands, clearings and rides in late summer. The purple emperor is a large butterfly that can only been found for a short period during late summer – bring your binoculars as this butterfly spends much of its time in the tree canopy where it feeds on aphid honeydew.

Danemead is one of only three known sites in Hertfordshire for the fragrant agrimony; a plant with a long spike of brilliant, star-shaped, yellow flower.

filled holes in the lagoon bed with gravel, pollarded willows and begun to construct a compost toilet.

Fir & Pond Woods – We have continued with holly clearance in Pond Wood, and are exploring options to graze cattle for the first time in the wet pasture to the south later in the year.

Danemead – Contractors have been re-pollarding some of the old hornbeam

pollards and we have thinned some of the woodland with the help of volunteer work parties.

Balls Wood – We have been mowing and scalloping rides in the wood and cleared two new rides – one large and one small – with the help of volunteers and contractors. The contractor work was completed using a Tesco Bags of Help grant.



⚡ Fragrant Agrimony



DAYS OUT

nature's calendar

Tim Hill, the Trust's Conservation Manager, highlights some of his favourite seasonal wildlife and makes suggestions for places to go, things to look out for and do through the months ahead...



MARCH

Rise and shine

The slow worm despite its name and appearance is neither a worm nor a snake. It's a limbless lizard, the giveaway identification features being eyelids and visible ear cavities which snakes don't have. I much prefer its scientific name, *Anguis fragilis*, the 'fragile snake', a name based on an ability to shed its tail to escape predation. In March these reptiles will be coming out of hibernation which may have started as long ago as last October. For any animal that's been holed-up for up to five months, the first thing on its mind is to find food. Emergence is timed carefully to coincide with prey becoming active again. Slow worms feed on slugs, worms, snails and other invertebrates that move slowly enough to be caught. They will spend the next couple of months feeding and getting in good condition for the mating season in May. Mating is rarely witnessed but it's a typically chaotic affair whereby the male bites the female at the back of the head in a less than romantic manner. If mating is successful, the female will give birth to eight live young in August or September. Slow worms are long-lived if they escape predation and are only fully grown after eight years or so, measuring up to 50 cm. The oldest known individual lived for 54 years.

Spotting slow worms in the wild is a challenging business but once you know where to look, they can be found. Being ectotherms, these animals rely on their environment to warm their body. Knowing this helps in knowing where to search for them.



Tim is Conservation Manager for Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust



Slow worms habitually seek out warm places to raise their temperatures to enable them to become active. A favourite place is below flat materials which absorb the warmth of sunlight such as sheets of wood or metal. I find it difficult to walk past such materials without having a quick shift below. Not only do slow worms love these places but so do grass snakes, mice and voles. In fact, these places are so reliable that surveys for slow worms and other reptiles make use of artificial refuges like this. In my experience the most successful material being corrugated tin or roofing felt.

Record your sighting!

If you do spot a slow worm or any other reptiles or mammals, please submit your records to the Hertfordshire Natural History Society for inclusion in a new atlas of mammals, amphibians and reptiles – www.hnhs.org



APRIL

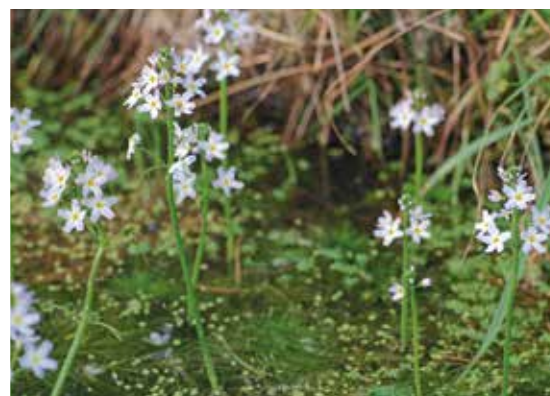
Damsel in a red dress

For odonatologists (dragonfly watchers) like me, April is anticipated greatly as it's the month when these insects take to the wing once more. In our counties, the first species to be encountered is usually the large red damselfly *Pyrhosoma nymphula*. The large red is our only red damselfly and can be seen throughout the spring until mid-summer. We do have red dragonflies – the common and ruddy darters, which fly from high summer but these are larger insects and when perched, hold their wings outstretched rather than along the body like damselflies.

Large reds can be found almost anywhere around ponds, lake and slow moving water courses. Given their colour, they can be surprisingly difficult to spot when perched – there is a surprising amount of red within the shades of the natural world. If you go in search of these insects the best tool to take is a pair of binoculars which focus closely, have a wide field of view and a good depth of field to the image – a 7x or 8x magnification is ideal and there are some 6x instruments



which are perfectly suited to observing these creatures. Choose a warm, ideally sunny day, select a good vantage point and scan slowly through the waterside vegetation. I would recommend the dragonfly trails at Amwell or Panshanger Park where special viewing places have been constructed. With patience you should be treated to great views. Spend time watching closely as the males search for a mate and eventually you will see pairs in tandem – the males grasp the female by the back of the neck and she will attach the tip of her abdomen to the male's genitalia, creating a distinctive 'wheel' structure. The pair may even remain in tandem during egg laying – this is a good ploy for the male as it prevents the female from mating with others. Eggs are laid into submerged vegetation from which nymphs hatch. It may take up to two years for these nymphs to grow and mature, feeding on smaller insects and fish fry, before emerging as adults to begin the life cycle once more.



MAY

Lilac shine

There is no more magnificent a spectacle in May than the lilac loveliness of thousands of water violet flowers reaching out of the Manifold Ditch at King's

Meads, between Hertford and Ware. However, it was not always so.

Water violet is one of our county's rarest plants. In the *Flora of Hertfordshire* (James, 2009) it was found in only 3% of tetrads. So why is it now so abundant at King's Meads? The short answer – a lot of hard, targeted work. We were very fortunate that a Hertford resident and naturalist, Alan Reynolds had 'adopted' King's Meads and was spending much of his time recording the biodiversity of the site. The information that Alan collected enabled us to clearly identify the priorities for conservation with a management plan. One of these priorities was the water violet, which was present but in small numbers. Based on experience elsewhere, a course of action was identified – the sensitive restoration of ditches through the removal of silt which had accumulated over decades, smothering the wetland plants. Once the management plan was agreed, the next challenge was how to pay for the restoration. We were fortunate that the Environment Agency were able to support the work and over the course of a few years the Manifold Ditch and others were sensitively de-silted with the help of a 13 tonne excavator. Our Reserves Officer Andy Brown and Alan Reynolds supervised the work extremely closely, ensuring that no habitats of existing value were lost along the way. The results of the restoration were extraordinary. In 2004, prior to the work Alan Reynolds counted just 220 water violet flower spikes; in 2007 the number was 2,000 and by 2009 there were 8,400!



JUNE

Nature is art

Look carefully at Sir John Everett Millais' painting *Ophelia*. It shows a beautiful young woman lying in a brook. Above her, a pollarded willow tree and along her sides, below the water, swathes of a plant with white buttercup-like flowers. This is *Ophelia*, a character from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, singing before eventually drowning in a river in Denmark. The reality is that Millais used the River Hogsmill in Ewell, a chalk stream, as inspiration. The plant is water crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis* – the classic and most indicative plant of this globally rare habitat.

Late June is when water crowfoot is at its peak and the best place to see it is in the River Mimram at Tewinbury or Panshanger Park. The leaves are the 'crow's foot' but this is difficult to see in flowing water, where the leaves are stretched out by the current. The plant forms a vital part of the ecology of chalk streams. The leaves provide habitat and cover for invertebrates and fish. As it grows it forms dense swathes. As the gin clear spring water flows, it forces channels to open up where flow is greater, scouring silt off the gravel base of the river creating perfect spawning grounds for brown trout and habitat for mayfly nymphs. At this time of year, the white and yellow flowers almost sparkle like stars in a bottle green sky, moved constantly by the ebb and flow of the current below.



DANIEL JOLMET



THE NATURE OF... a bug hotel

Bug hotels are a great way to attract insects into your garden; the structure will benefit the creatures you are providing a home for as well as the biodiversity and health of your garden.

Every bug hotel is different; there are many types catering to the needs of different insects. Lots try to appeal to as many creatures as possible by providing differing habitat in the same structure. Usually starting as a tower of pallets, people then fill the gaps with a mix of natural and man-made materials.

Charlotte Hussey, The Trust's Communications Officer, looks at what insects and materials you might find in a typical garden bug hotel and how this can help your garden.

Dead Wood is essential for beetles and their larvae and also supports fungi which breaks down the woody material. Other small insects can be found under bark crevices such as centipedes and woodlice. **Rotting wood** also attracts these insects, as well as spiders. Woodlice

and millipedes break down woody plant material and so play an important part of a garden's lifecycle.

Different sized holes, made by drilling into wood or inserting things like bamboo cane or hollow stems into gaps, make for fantastic solitary bee nest sites. Attracting bees will also benefit your garden with their help of pollination.

Dry and wet leaves mimic litter on the forest floor and are great for invertebrates and hibernating ladybirds – an insect you will want sticking around due to its large appetite for pesky aphids!

Straw and hay provide a cosy place to burrow and hibernate over winter. Materials like **stone and pebbles** are best placed in shady low areas to support

frogs and newts that need cool and damp areas that can remain frost free over winter. Frogs will also help eat slugs, another bonus for your garden.

To add even more value to your garden, include some **corrugated cardboard** in a dry part of your hotel, as the narrow tubes will attract lacewings which are fantastic at keeping pests, including aphids, under control.

When planning your hotel, include a **sheltered wooden box at ground level**, with leaf 'bedding' to give hedgehogs a safe place to hibernate over the winter and tempt them away from temporary log-piles elsewhere.

If you make a bug hotel, remember to try and provide a diverse habitat. Place the hotel somewhere where parts providing shelter to things like beetles and frogs can remain cool and damp, while other areas are able to face sunlight for insects that prefer warmer conditions, such as bees.





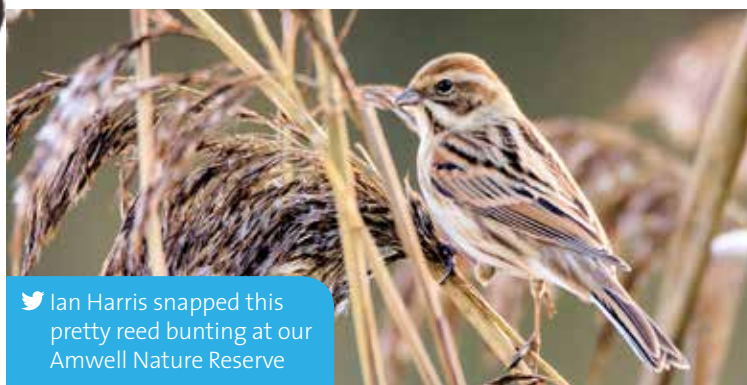
Tweets from the field...

The delights of nature have certainly delivered over winter – here are some highlights.

🐦 Bertie made an appearance at SuStAinable StAlbans Week – The next SuStAinable StAlbans Week will be 21-29 April 2018



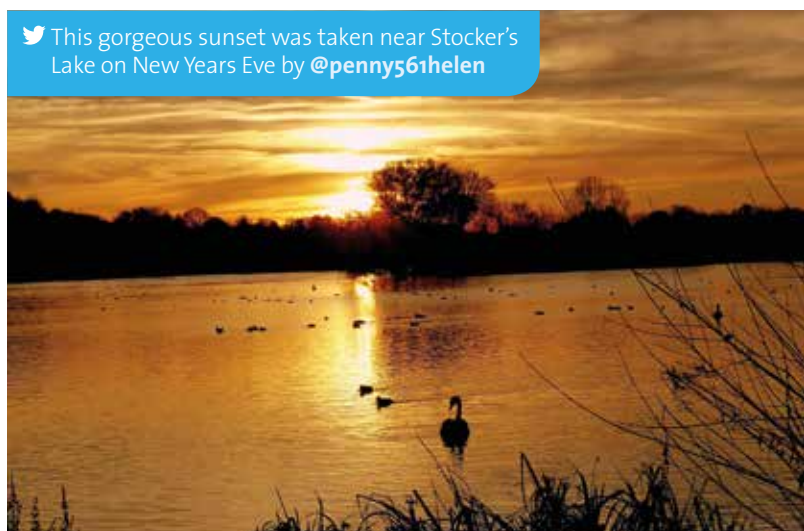
🐦 This fantastic kingfisher image was taken by Giles Smith, in Verulamium Park



🐦 Ian Harris snapped this pretty reed bunting at our Amwell Nature Reserve



🐦 @paulhdigiman took this photo of the elusive bittern trying its hand at iceskating over at Rye Meads



🐦 This gorgeous sunset was taken near Stocker's Lake on New Years Eve by @penny561helen



We love seeing your pictures from our reserves and hearing about your wildlife experiences in **Hertfordshire and Middlesex**. Get involved with the conversation on Twitter @HMWTBadger or Facebook [facebook.com/hertswildlifetrust](https://www.facebook.com/hertswildlifetrust).



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**Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 July
10:00am - 4:00pm, Panshanger Park**

Join us at the beautiful Panshanger Park for a weekend
of walks, talks and family activities to celebrate the
wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex

FIND OUT MORE AT HERTSWILDLIFETRUST.ORG.UK/FESTIVAL

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