

Celebrating the wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex

# wildlifematters

Spring 2024



**Herts &  
Middlesex**  
Wildlife Trust



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**60 YEARS  
WILD**  
1964 - 2024



# Welcome



I've been reflecting on the last few months and how wildlife is faring in our area. We know the world is facing an ecological and climate crisis and the Trust is focussed on finding ways to enable nature's recovery and inspire more people to take action. Each year we see a growing number of people supporting the Trust and many more people actively involved through our Wilder Communities projects. Species and habitat programmes remain a priority, in particular wetlands and the rare species they support such as Water Voles.

And yet at the same time, we have had to run one of the highest profile campaigns in the history of the Trust to ensure the future of a nationally important site for wildlife in Harefield - Broadwater Lake SSSI. It's heartbreaking to think that such a precious place is under threat, but equally heart-warming to see the number of people who have shared their concerns and objected to the planning application – you can read more about this on page 4. I'd like to say a personal thank you to everyone who has made their voice heard and indeed to everyone who kindly supports the Trust financially. Without your membership and other donations we would not be able to stand up for wildlife on this particular issue and the many other threats that our wildlife and wild places face.

We have an exciting year ahead when we'll be marking the Trust's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In 1964, the Trust was founded by a group of individuals who cared about the future of wildlife and our role remains as important as ever. Looking forwards, our new Chair Peter Tallantire shares his vision for the Trust on page 20.

As part of our 60<sup>th</sup> celebrations we will be having a series of special events in September to say an enormous 'Thank You' to all our supporters and to inspire more people to stand up for local wildlife. Our AGM for members will take place on Saturday 28 September and I very much hope to see you there.

As ever, thank you for your support - we couldn't do our work without you.

*Lesley*

**Lesley Davies**  
Chief Executive



St Albans Pond Walk



Green-winged Orchid and Cowslips at Hunsdon Mead © Tim Hill

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Orange-tip © Bob Coyle

## Would you like to receive your Wildlife Matters magazine digitally?

In the last issue of Wildlife Matters, we asked you if you would like to receive your copy of *Wildlife Matters* straight to your email inbox. This information will help to inform our plans moving forward. If you didn't already participate, we would still love to hear from you. Please help us by completing the short questionnaire via this link: <https://bit.ly/3wEu2IL>



Thank you for helping us to improve our service to members.

## Did you know we have a members' webpage?

Visit [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/mymembership](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/mymembership) to find frequently asked questions and how to manage your membership. You can also discover more about our local conservation projects and campaigns, as well as upcoming events so that you can explore your beautiful local wildlife.

**Cover:** Thank you to designers Ella and May for creating our special 60th Anniversary magazine cover illustration. Members of the Trust, Ella and May have set up 'The Highest Finca' to reconnect society and nature through events, workshops, walks and more where they now live in East Anglia [www.thehighestfinca.uk](https://www.thehighestfinca.uk)

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Join an event



Discover wildlife



Donate



Do



Take Action



Enjoy free of charge



Make your voice heard - #DefendNature

All details correct at time of printing.



# Herts and Middlesex Wild News



Broadwater Lake © Tim Hill

## Threat to Broadwater Lake SSSI

In our last edition of *Wildlife Matters*, we spoke of the threat to Broadwater Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with the expectation that Hillingdon Council would imminently submit their planning application to build a new Watersports Facility and Activity Centre on the site. As feared, the application for a proposed development that threatens a nationally protected wetland and the wildlife that relies on it was submitted and put out for public consultation in November.

The Trust submitted their objection to the scheme, along with **Natural England**, the **Environment Agency**, **RSPB**, **London Wildlife Trust** and the **Colne Valley Regional Park**.

We can also confirm that **1200 comments in objection** were submitted to the public consultation - thank you for taking action and defending nature.



FIND OUT MORE

### Online

You can keep up to date with the ongoing campaign at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/threat-broadwater-lake-sssi](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/threat-broadwater-lake-sssi)



## Green Letterboxes

As part of our aim to promote the value of nature to health and wellbeing, we have recently started collaborating with the local charity Green Connections who provide support for vulnerable and socially isolated people in Hertfordshire. The charity's main focus is to help those they work

with to build a relationship with nature and find ways to enjoy and interact with their local environment.

One of the ways the charity works is to send out 'Green Letterboxes' full of activities to get the recipients engaging with their local wildlife, always considering the varied ability and needs of the many they support. Some of our team contributed by writing postcards, capturing a personal moment in nature. These messages were included in the charity's mailing to provide an opportunity for recipients to have a moment of interaction which they might not regularly have, to take inspiration and feel encouraged to enjoy the nature on their doorstep.



FIND OUT MORE

### Online

Find out more at [greenconnections.co.uk](https://greenconnections.co.uk)



Osprey Nest at Stocker's Lake © Jason Fathers

## New Osprey Nest for Stocker's Lake

We're delighted to move a step closer to our ambition of Ospreys breeding in the region, with a newly constructed Osprey nest towering above Stocker's Lake Nature Reserve. The magnificent birds of prey have regularly been seen feeding on the lake and it is hoped that a juvenile might spot the site on migration and take up residence in future. Thanks to Affinity Water for funding the project and watch this space for more Osprey news!



Stream at Astonbury Wood

## Awarded for our role in protecting ancient woodland

We were honoured to receive the Enterprise Award at the annual Pride of Stevenage Awards for our work to secure the future of Astonbury Wood.

As you may be aware, the Trust purchased the 125-year lease for the site after a major public fundraising campaign in 2021 to secure the 54-acre ancient woodland. We are thankful to the fantastic support we had from Aston Parish Council and the local community in promoting the fundraising campaign and to all of the individuals, groups and organisations that gave so generously to the appeal. It's fantastic that the judges recognised the new nature reserve as a 'delightful place for people to both experience and improve prospects for wildlife in Stevenage'. You can read more about Astonbury Wood and our Wilder Woodlands project on page 19.



Youth volunteers at Batchwood © Paul Harris

## Young people volunteer initiatives

Did you know that we are working with various partners to create volunteering opportunities for young people and an early thirst for nature? Here are just a few examples:

- Together with Rediscovering the River Colne and Community Connections CIC, we have offered eight young people, aged 14-18, a place on a Youth Volunteer Scheme where they will have the opportunity to carry out practical nature conservation work on the River Colne.
- A monthly Duke of Edinburgh volunteering programme has

been set-up with the Friends of Batchwood to manage the St Albans' woodland and to increase biodiversity onsite.

- We've partnered with Apex 360 to deliver three sessions, to two schools in Dacorum to educate over 80, Year 5 students about their local environment and the positive impact they can have on it, through their actions and behaviours.
- We've recruited Wilder Schools Champions to help schools to improve their grounds for wildlife - read more on page 24!

## Cotswold Outdoors Discount

We are pleased to confirm that supporters of the Trust will be able to enjoy a 15% discount at Cotswold Outdoors in 2024.

The discount is valid for your personal use on full-priced items (excludes electronics and selected lines) both in-store and online with Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Need and Snow+Rock. You can either show a copy of the flyer alongside in store or use the code online - AF-WILDLIFE-M5.

The discount is offered by Cotswold Outdoor to supporters and friends of Wildlife Trusts throughout the UK. Members of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are invited to take up the discount but it is not offered as an exclusive benefit to members of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.





# UK NEWS



After almost completely disappearing from UK seas, bluefin tuna made a comeback in 2023

## An historic year for marine conservation

The creation of the first Highly Protected Marine Areas in English water made 2023 an historic year for marine conservation. This huge milestone was achieved thanks to years of campaigning by The Wildlife Trusts' sea-loving supporters. The new gold-standard of protection will stop all damaging activities such as trawling and will help marine life to recover, benefitting fishers and boosting carbon storing habitats at sea. These special places cover less than half a percent of English seas though, so it's just the first tiny step towards better protected seas.

Marine areas weren't the only reason to celebrate last year, with The Wildlife Trusts' Marine Review 2023 also showing an exciting rise in sightings of apex predators – those at the very top of the food chain – in our seas. One species that created an incredible spectacle off the UK coast this year was Bluefin Tuna. Dan Abbott, cinematographer, witnessed

a Bluefin Tuna feeding event in UK waters. He said: "The first indicator that something exciting was about to happen was seeing lots of seabirds – mainly Gannets and Shearwaters – gathering. As they have an aerial view, seabirds can often be a great indicator of where fish and marine mammals may be below the surface. As the tuna feed, the surface appears like boiling water as these powerful and agile fish speed through the sea." Atlantic Bluefish Tuna were once common in UK waters, but overfishing caused numbers to plummet during the 20th century, with the fish all but vanishing from our waters by the 1990s.

Humpback and Fin Whales, which were once more common around our coasts, also showed promising signs of recovery in 2023. Humpback Whales were seen off Burhou, a small island northwest of Alderney (part of the Channel Islands) and off Cornwall. There were also increased sightings of Northern Fin Whales, the

second largest mammal in the world. Meanwhile it was a bumper year for Risso's Dolphins, with 156 sightings in 2023, compared to 45 in 2022! Reports of 'super-pod' feeding frenzies were reported, with Common Dolphins and Fin Whales joining in.

It wasn't all good news however, as in contrast to these wins, the global pandemic of avian flu has sadly continued to devastate UK seabirds. While there are signs that some birds are showing immunity, vast numbers have been lost.



FIND OUT MORE

### Online

Discover more about our 2023 marine review here [wildlifetrusts.org/news/marine-review](https://wildlifetrusts.org/news/marine-review)

## Vanishing rules leave farm wildlife at risk

Basic rules that help protect hedgerows and rivers on or surrounding farmland expired on 31st December 2023, with nothing to replace them – putting wildlife in our countryside at greater risk of harm.

These rules, known as 'cross compliance' had to be followed by farmers if they wanted to receive rural farm payments from UK Government between 2005 and 2023. To qualify, farmers were not permitted to farm up to the edge of rivers, so as to help prevent soil and farm pollution from being washed into the water. There were also rules about when hedgerows could be cut so that breeding farmland birds were protected at the most important times of year.

Following the UK's exit from the European Union, the UK Government announced that this rule would cease to exist at the end of 2023, but that

it would be replaced by new UK rules. However, no new rules are in place, and the Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has not confirmed whether these protections for nature will be maintained. Meanwhile, nature on farms is in limbo, with nesting birds in danger and our already struggling rivers and streams at risk of increased pollution.

The Wildlife Trusts have joined forces with National Trust and RSPB to urge the UK Government to uphold protections for nature while providing much better support for farmers. We would like to see farmers paid to take a 'whole farm' approach to nature-friendly farming through better designed payment schemes and access to quality independent advice on the best actions that can be taken on their farms.

Find out more at [wtru.st/hedgerows](https://wtru.st/hedgerows)



## General election countdown: nature matters!

With a general election expected in 2024, The Wildlife Trusts have been investigating how much nature matters to our supporters and the general public, and whether the nature policies set out by political parties will influence how they vote.

We carried out two nationwide surveys, which revealed that environmental charities are supported by a large and politically diverse range of people – with voters feeling similarly connected to nature, regardless of where they identify on the left to right wing spectrum.

Results from Wildlife Trust supporters indicated that 61% would vote based on environmental policies and a further 32% are considering doing the same. Of all those surveyed (including non-supporters), only 7% didn't believe that nature loss or climate change were a serious threat to humanity.

The upcoming general election will be vital for our natural world, and these results suggest that voters are calling on all political parties to make bold plans to restore nature, tackle water pollution and halt climate change.

## UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



### 1 Squirrelling away

The Great Scottish Squirrel Survey had more participants than previous years, with just under 2,000 Red and Grey Squirrel sightings across the country. Every record helps Scottish Wildlife Trust to understand population distributions and take targeted action to protect red squirrels. Sightings of both species can be reported all year-round. [wtru.st/squirrel-sightings](https://wtru.st/squirrel-sightings)

### 2 Very vole done

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust is set to bring UK's fastest declining mammal, Water Voles, back from the brink. Half a million pounds from Natural England's Species Recovery Programme will create vital wetland habitat and restore 50km of rivers to increase Water Vole numbers. [wtru.st/notts-water-vole](https://wtru.st/notts-water-vole)



### 3 High security

One of our most bizarre and beautiful rare birds, the Curlew, is to get £230k worth of home improvements at Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) Gallows Bridge Farm Nature Reserve. New pools, security cameras and anti-predator fencing will help to create new bespoke habitat for this endangered species. [wtru.st/curlew-habitat](https://wtru.st/curlew-habitat)



# 60 Years and Counting...



Pond Skater © Luke Massey 2020VISION



## The Trust's Steadfast Commitment to Nature is More Vital than Ever

Chloë Edwards, our Director of Nature Recovery reflects on the Trust's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and explains how there's no time to rest on our laurels at this pivotal point in the nature crisis. Jubilation can be found however, in the value of our partnerships and in shared aims. Specifically, we take a look at upscaling our efforts with pond creation and increasing wetland cover in the region, thus improving prospects for wildlife in the future – something we can all be involved in.



For six decades, despite the backdrop of an everchanging world, the Trust has steadfastly remained a consistent force in Hertfordshire and Middlesex, serving as an unwavering advocate for nature and striving to protect our most precious wild spaces. Whilst there are many significant and inspirational wins for nature that have been achieved in our area over the

last sixty years, the Trust's landmark Hertfordshire State of Nature Report (2020) brought home the stark reality of nature's decline in this period, identifying over 1500 species (20% of those species assessed) as being Hertfordshire Species of Conservation Concern – extinct or threatened in a Hertfordshire context. Key pressures were identified in the

report as agricultural management, climate change, hydrological change, urbanisation, pollution, woodland management and invasive non-native species. It has never been clearer that we still need to do more. And we need to do it with much greater urgency.

As we find ourselves almost half way through the most pivotal decade of

our lives, our Wilder 2030 Strategy sets out our ambition over the next five years to see at least 30% of land across Hertfordshire and Middlesex connected and protected for nature's recovery. We know how to join-up our fragmented habitats and bring species back to restore nature-rich, connected, resilient habitats, and we have a fantastic back catalogue of projects demonstrating what can be achieved when we work together.

### Collaboration is king

Whilst the mechanisms to enable nature's recovery have evolved significantly since the Trust's inception, the constant at our core over this time has always been collaboration. No individual or single organisation can tackle the challenges facing our collective futures alone. We must work together better than we ever have, embracing innovative and inclusive approaches to connect with new and diverse audiences, and amplifying the reach and effectiveness of the initiatives we

prioritise over the coming years. We entered 2024 with a new vehicle for doing exactly this - the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership – which has recently formed to drive forward the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the county. Led by Hertfordshire County Council, this new partnership, formed of representatives from local authorities, statutory bodies, environmental organisations and landholders, will work with wider stakeholders across Hertfordshire to set our nature recovery priorities and will have the ability to direct significant investment to benefit nature and people to the mantra of "bigger, better, more joined up", so watch this space!

### Let's get wetter!

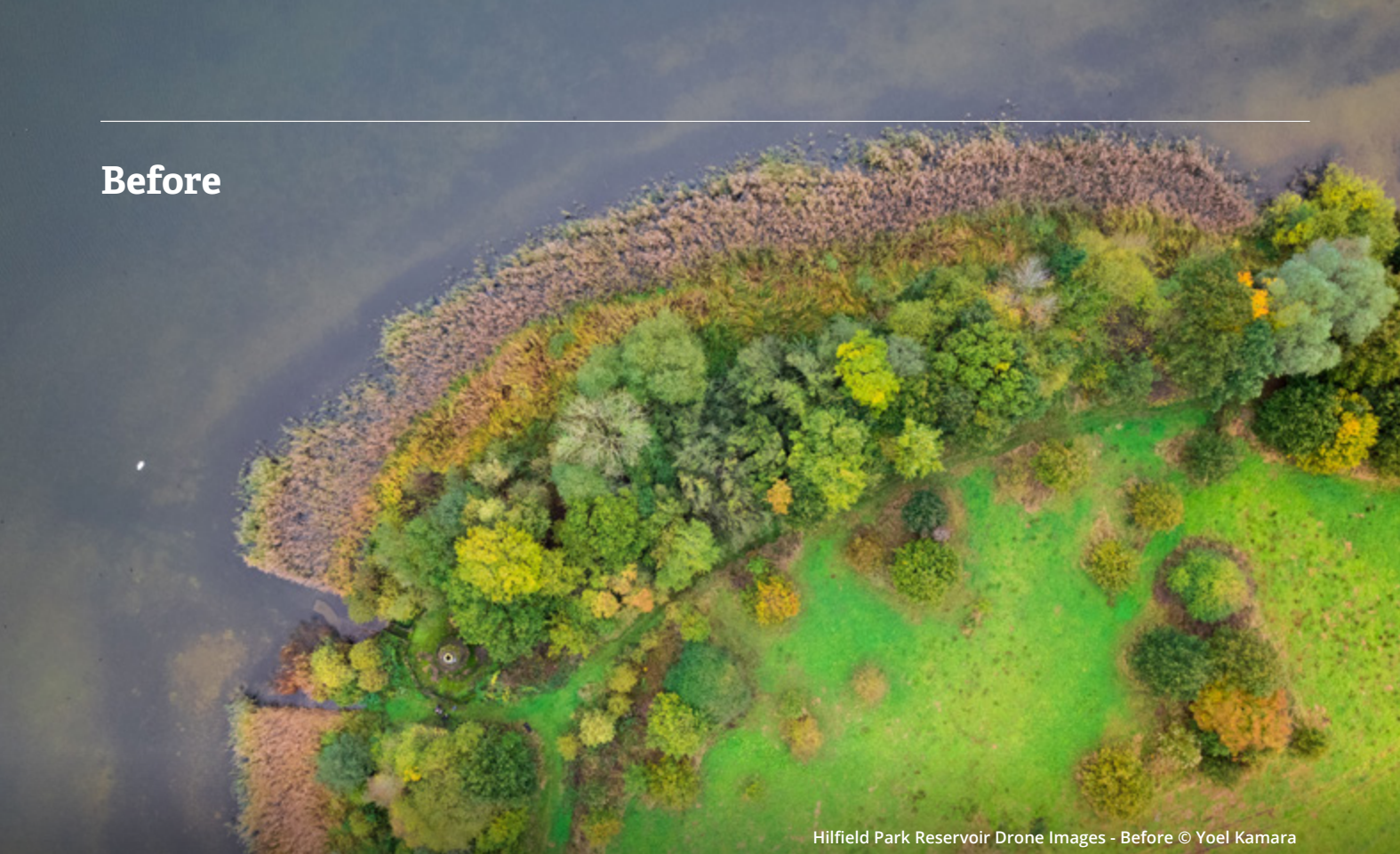
One area where there is enormous potential to collectively upscale our efforts is around ponds and wetlands. Hertfordshire is a wetland-poor county, with wetlands covering only 1% of our area, and we have lost at least 50% of our ponds over

the last century, yet these habitats are particularly important for wildlife and play a crucial role in our landscapes. These wonderful wet places, regardless of size, provide critical refuges for a diverse array of plants and animals – more than 350 of our Hertfordshire Species of Conservation Concern are associated with ponds and wetland habitats! They also contribute to landscape resilience by serving a dual purpose in safeguarding against both drought and flooding (as they effectively collect and store excess water), can enhance water quality (acting as natural filters, purifying water by trapping pollutants and sediments) and are incredibly efficient at locking away carbon.

Overleaf, Josh Kalms, People and Wildlife Officer at the Trust takes a deeper dive into our partnership project with Affinity Water and demonstrates the impact of what is being achieved by working together.



Before



Hilfield Park Reservoir Drone Images - Before © Yoel Kamara

After



Hilfield Park Reservoir Drone Images - After © Yoel Kamara

## Revitalising wetland margins at Hilfield Park Reservoir

Hilfield Park Reservoir is a fantastic Local Nature Reserve, containing the largest undisturbed waterbody in Hertfordshire, situated between Bushey and Elstree. The Trust manages the reserve for wildlife on behalf of landowners, Affinity Water, and one of our key tasks is to control vegetation growth along the 2.2km naturalised margin of the lake. Without tackling shading trees around the water's edge, biodiversity will decrease as species are lost, so our ongoing aim is to maintain 60-70% of the nature reserve as 'open' habitats, including a mixture of bare mud, marsh, sedge and reedbeds. The more diverse, the better!

Working in partnership with Affinity Water since 2018 we have delivered a suite of ambitious conservation projects on the site, including the creation and maintenance of scrapes, ditches, creeks and lagoons. Since 2017, the Trust has worked with Affinity Water to establish an incredible 62 ponds at Hilfield Park Reservoir. Within just a few years, these new features were delivering for wildlife, with 22 species of damselfly and dragonfly making

use of the areas, 19 of which were ovipositing (egg laying) – including new colonisers Downy Emerald and Norfolk Hawker dragonflies. Fifty-five bird species have been recorded on the newly-created wetland areas, including significant gatherings of wildfowl, Oystercatchers mating, Kingfishers hunting, long staying Green Sandpipers, and Black-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel dropping in. Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Grass Snake have also been breeding and feeding all within the new wetlands. We are fortunate to benefit from the expertise of local volunteers who dedicate much time to monitoring the species at the nature reserve. Huge thanks are owed to our volunteer recorders, particularly Steve Murray and Tony Taylor. Affinity Water have committed to creating many more ponds on this site by 2030, contributing to the development of one of the most significant pond complexes in the county!

The ambition doesn't end there! At the end of 2023, we embarked on one of the biggest habitat creation projects in around a decade on any Trust-managed nature reserve, on the south margin of the reservoir. To begin, we had a long-reach digger expand and enhance a reedbed. The ground was lowered to enable

the reed to spread, which will form a diverse reedbed 20 metres thick and 100 metres wide. Channels were carved through to the open water, enabling fish to swim deep within the reedbed to feed and shelter. Sections of deeper water are refuges, while shallow areas will attract amphibians and wading birds. Shading invasive tree species were removed from the lake margins and their cut branches and trunks placed around the perimeter of the reedbed, providing shelter for fish and nesting space for birds, whilst reducing the effect of wave action on the reedbed.

In a second area, we created a complex lagoon by carefully deepening the ground and using the excavated material to form a series of islands, we hope Black-necked Grebe (a nationally rare breeding bird) will take to this area. The south margin of the site is now highly connected for wildlife, with 600 metres of diverse and resilient wetland habitats.



Donate

Please consider making a donation to help the Trust to build on the work of the last 60 years and protect our local wildlife as we look to the future. Find out more at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/donate](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/donate)

## You can do this too!

The single most important thing any of us can do to help wildlife on our doorstep is to create a pond. Ponds are supercharged for wildlife and support a huge range of species. As well as the creatures that thrive within them, ponds provide wildlife with drinking water, a place to bathe, shelter and a welcome supply of insect and plant-based food.

As Chloë has already referenced, we've lost half of our ponds over the last hundred years so isn't it high time we put ponds back into our region? Ponds come in many shapes and sizes and can be incorporated



Small Garden Pond © Nicola Thompson

within most domestic set-ups. Don't think you need a large garden or the physical strength to muster a big digging project - that's simply not true. Of course, you may choose to make a pond a large feature within your outdoor space but equally if you have a balcony and can lay your hands

on a washing up bowl or similar watertight container you can make a mini pond. It's your determination to do good for wildlife that our natural world needs in bucket loads – that and spreading the message of just how important ponds are - please tell your friends, family, neighbours and colleagues – think of yourself as a pond ambassador!

If you've got the will, we can share the know-how. Read our blog 'Make a wildlife pond!' and we'll talk you through it step-by-step, whether you are landscaping your garden or going for a container pond [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/make-wildlife-pond](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/make-wildlife-pond).

We hope you are inspired to give a pond a go – we can't think of a better way to mark the occasion of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and to provide hope for the future of our local wildlife.



FIND OUT MORE

### Online

You can head to our website for comprehensive instructions on how to build a pond, make a mini pond or create a bog garden at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/actions](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/actions)



# Your Wild SPRING

**Tim Hill**, the Trust's Conservation Manager shares his ideas for going wild this spring in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.



Tim Hill © Frieda Rummenhohl

## Making a good Stort

There is no better place to spend a couple of hours in May than the riverside meadows at the Trust's Hunsdon Mead Nature Reserve in the Stort Valley near Roydon. Either catch the train to Roydon or park in Roydon village or Harlow and saunter down the towpath of the River Stort navigation to Hunsdon Mead for a yellow spectacle that is unique in Hertfordshire. Here you will be confronted by a sea of buttercups underlain by a carpet of Cowslips. The sheer scale of the flower meadow is enough to take your breath away, stretching for over a kilometre between the canal and old River Stort.

## Mellow yellow and purple haze

At Hunsdon Mead there are quite literally thousands of Cowslips. It's thought that the name comes from the old English for cow dung (cow 'slups') as historically, the flowers would be found growing amongst the cow pats on damp, slippery ground in riverside meadows such as Hunsdon Mead – we should think 'cow slips' rather than 'cow's lips'. It is a plant of the primula family with dull, fleshy, wrinkly leaves with up to 30 sulphur yellow flowers jostling atop a stem about 20 cm long. Pollination is by long-tongued insects such as some species of butterflies, moths and bees. The seeds take a long time to ripen, not normally being shed until July. It is the county flower of our neighbouring county, Essex.

Whilst it's the buttercups and Cowslips that provide the overwhelming spectacle at Hunsdon Mead there is a plant altogether rarer for those willing to search hard and get dirty knees. Green-winged Orchids have been bucking the national declines and increasing slowly here for the last few years. It was formerly a

widespread species in Hertfordshire but degradation and loss of habitat has left it restricted to just a handful of places. This small purple-flowered plant is easily overlooked amongst the surrounding vegetation. To appreciate it fully means getting down to its low level which means hands and knees or ideally prostrate – there's nothing more amusing than seeing a bunch of naturalists lying around on their bellies paying homage to this diminutive orchid! It's worth getting down and dirty though as this is the only way to see the winged petals green stripes, from which the orchid gets its name.



Green-winged Orchid and Cowslips at Hunsdon Mead © Tim Hill



# Shrimp-powered Sandpipers!

Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve near Welwyn Garden City is a wetland gem, nestled on the bank of the River Lea and spring is a good time to visit and witness the pre-migration fattening-up of one of our rarest birds. This former Watercress bed is now cared for by the Trust with the help of a team of dedicated volunteers such that it has become the most important place in the country for wintering Green Sandpipers. Although not commercially grown any more, the gravelly bed and spring water still provides perfect conditions for an abundance of Watercress. The cress is managed to provide habitats for Water Shrimps which in turn provide food for animals such as the rare and elusive Water Shrew. Green Sandpipers also feast on the shrimps and each bird may eat 8000 per day!

Look closely at the birds wading here and you may notice some wearing coloured rings on their legs. The ringing has been carried out by a volunteer research team of Ken Smith, Barry Trevis and Mike Reed, and since the 1980s over 200 birds have been caught and fitted with a unique combination of rings. These have generated an average of around 1000 re-sightings of marked birds per year. This work enables a good understanding of the behaviour and ecology of the birds in winter and from this enables us to plan better for the conservation of the birds and their habitat.



Green Sandpiper © Barry Trevis

## Arrivals and departures

The team's next challenge was to determine the breeding areas of Green Sandpipers that spend their winter in southern Britain and to investigate their migration ecology. To do this, birds were fitted with 'archival' tags, which measure light level and global position. When birds left Lemsford, location data were collected during their northward migration to the breeding area in western Scandinavia, during the breeding period and during their return to Lemsford. Having fitted 19 tags between 2013 and 2022 it was found that birds departed from Lemsford Springs in late April and moved rapidly to the breeding areas in about two days, covering a mean distance of 1463 km! Females stayed in the breeding areas for only 42 days and

males 60 days. The return migration to Lemsford took a median of 11.5 days with the first birds back by June 19th and the last by July 6th. The team concluded that by spending the winter in Hertfordshire, relatively northerly and close to the breeding areas, the birds are balancing the risks of poor survival in extremely cold winters with the benefits of rapid and relatively easy movement to and from their breeding areas.



### FIND OUT MORE

You can read the full report by searching - Ken W. Smith, Barry E. Trevis & Mike Reed (2024) *Migration patterns and breeding areas of Green Sandpipers Tringa ochropus wintering in southern Britain*, Bird Study, DOI: 10.1080/00063657.2023.2298662



Blackthorn blossom © Richard Burkmar

## Sensing spring

### See this:

Look out for Blue Tits engaging in their wing-fluttering display flight as they try to find a mate.

### Smell this:

Being careful to avoid the thorns, enjoy the almondy scent of Blackthorn which will be frothing over our hedgerows from late-March through April.

### Hear this:

Listen out for the first Cuckoo of the year. Oughtonhead Common near Hitchin is a reliable place to hear, and see them in recent years.

### Feel this:

Have a gentle squeeze of the teddy-bear soft flowers of Sallow 'Pussy' Willows. You should be able to find them in our river valleys.

# Ways to experience and enjoy spring

## Woodland stars

By mid-March, the woodland floor of our best Oak-Hornbeam woods is usually dotted with the white flowers of Wood Anemones, sometimes forming rugs of tightly packed blooms, scattered through the trees. A true harbinger of spring, this plant is one of the first to flower. It's a perennial, spreading through a complex root system as most of its seeds are infertile. The white flowers provide a welcome supply of pollen to newly emerged insects and it's not uncommon to see bumble bees buzzing from flower to flower. The Wood Anemone is also close to this Trust's heart, being the county flower of Middlesex. It flowers right through to May, before the leaves of the trees form full shade and by mid-summer there is no sign of the plant left to be seen. If you would like to see Wood Anemones, one of the best places is Whomerly Wood in Stevenage where there is a waymarked woodland trail, created by the Trust in 2012, in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council.

## Bursting forth

As spring unfolds it's not just flowers but our shrubs that will be bursting into flower. Hawthorn's colloquial name is May as this is the peak month when it's in flower, providing a bounty of nectar and pollen for a huge diversity of insects. Hawthorn flowers have a very distinctive and far-reaching scent but not one of my favourites as to my nose, it has a somewhat lavatorial aroma. The insects seem to like it though and it's wonderful to think that the flowers that are pollinated in May will develop into the haws that will sustain Blackbirds, Redwings and Fieldfares next winter. It's also worth looking closely at the bark of old Hawthorns which are in open, sunny spots. You may spot small 'D'-shaped holes. These are made by the Hawthorn Jewel Beetle *Agilus sinuatus* as the adult emerges following feeding as a larvae within the shrub's trunk. These are 'saproxilic' beetles, species which depend for at least some of their lives on dead or rotting wood.

## Red alert

Anytime from late April, with a peak in May, Large Red Damselflies will be emerging from ponds. Historically it would have taken nymphs a couple of years to develop from egg to emergence but there is increasing evidence that, with warmer temperatures in southern England, emergence is happening after just a year. Nymphs will climb up a plant stem early in the morning, lock on with their legs and then over the course of a couple of hours, the metamorphosis to adult will take place. Once burst free of their larval skins, the adult will rest for some time as their wings harden before flying off as a silvery 'teneral'. After feeding, the scarlet colour scheme will develop and the fully mature adult will head back to the pond to find a partner to mate and start the next generation.



Agilus sinuatus exit hole in Hawthorn © Tim Hill

Large Red Damselfly emerging © Tim Hill





# A lasting legacy

Paul Burt was a man who loved wildlife and woodlands, and actively enjoyed the great outdoors. When he died, aged 99, in 2022, his family really wanted to be able to mark his life by supporting a local wildlife project in his memory. Having seen that the Trust had successfully managed different large-scale projects, they considered the financial aspects and sought legal support in directing a significant legacy donation to the Trust. Paul's daughter, Sue Pike tells us about her father and why she's thrilled to be helping wildlife conservation in his memory.

My Dad was a scientist and pragmatist, he always focused on what could be done. This was forged by World War II, his time at Trinity College Cambridge where he read Zoology, his connection with nature and his many climbing, caving and walking experiences, which lasted a lifetime. A very independent man, in his 90s he was still organising annual walking, exploring and industrial history trips all over the country for his large circle of pals, affectionately known as the 'Codgers'!

As a girl, I visited the River Windrush in Oxfordshire with Dad and seeing the Water Voles there sparked in me

a great love of chalk streams. Another more adventurous trip was to the frozen Kinda Downfall in Derbyshire, where we were fascinated by the tiny Shrew dashing across the frozen plateau. These trips and others like them inspired a great love and interest in nature.

When Dad died, we decided we really wanted to support a project that would benefit wildlife, so we looked to the Trust. We have been members for a number of years and had seen their success in managing local projects, for example, Panshanger Park, the Wilder St Albans community project and the Archers Green fundraising

campaign. In particular, Archers Green enchanted us and we had previously visited Purwell Ninesprings Nature Reserve, near Hitchin, before we knew the Trust managed it – both of those locations resonated with us, and so we identified the projects we wanted to support. We decided to apportion part of Dad's legacy to help the Trust meet their fundraising target to buy and protect Archers Green, near Tewin, and the rest to carry out habitat enhancements and visitor access improvements at Purwell Ninesprings Nature Reserve.

As Dad had not planned to allocate a sum from his Will to a charitable



Purwell Ninesprings © Josh Kubale



donation, we were able to arrange for some of the resulting Inheritance Tax bill to be directed to the Trust. This required legal advice from a solicitor who drew up a Deed of Variation to enable the transfer of a very generous

donation of £175,000 to be directed to our chosen Trust projects.

Dad would be thrilled that his legacy is supporting projects at Archers Green and Purwell Ninesprings, actively encouraging appreciation of nature. His legacy will live on enabling other people to enjoy the countryside he loved.

**The Trust is enormously grateful to Sue and her family for working with us to direct this amazing and lasting support to our work. Paul's legacy donation enabled the Trust to reach our fundraising target for the Archers Green campaign last year, and will also see vital work start at Purwell Ninesprings next winter for the benefit of wildlife and our local communities.**

## Could you remember wildlife in your Will?

Leaving a charitable gift in your Will is literally a once in a lifetime opportunity.

No matter how big or small, leaving a gift in your Will is one of the most valuable ways that you can help protect your local wildlife. A gift of just 1% of your estate can do amazing things for wildlife. Find out more about leaving a legacy at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/legacy](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/legacy) or, you can start a conversation about the many ways you can leave a gift or, honour the memory of a loved one by emailing Sarah Croft at [fundraising@hmwt.org](mailto:fundraising@hmwt.org)

*Thank you to Sue Pike and her husband, Nicolas for their help in creating this article.*



FIND OUT MORE

## Online

Discover more about Archers Green Nature Reserve and Purwell Ninesprings Nature Reserve at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves)





Bluebells at Astonbury Wood © Alice Bradley

# Bluebell Fanzone

It's not too long to wait now until our woodlands are carpeted in Bluebells and their lovely scent fills the air, but have you ever wondered what else might be looking forward to seeing them? Ian Carle, our Nature Reserves Manager, reveals some of Bluebell's biggest fans.

Bluebells flower relatively early in the season so provide a welcome meal to insects that are on the wing looking for nectar. But which ones in particular benefit from Bluebells? Sussex University has trawled the literature to try and shed some light on which species play a key role in the pollination of plants. Their Database of Pollinator Interactions ([sussex.ac.uk/lifesci/ebe/dopi/about](https://sussex.ac.uk/lifesci/ebe/dopi/about)) shows that by far the most frequent recorded interactor with Bluebells are bees, with the Common Carder Bee, topping the list, perhaps unsurprisingly as it's our most common bumblebee. Common



COMMON CARDER BEE

Another frequent bee visitor is the descriptively named Hairy-footed Flower Bee. This species is one of the first solitary bees to emerge in the spring. They look similar to bumblebees but have a faster more darting flight. Look out for the pale gingery males patrolling patches of Bluebells and chasing away any other insects that approach in the hope of finding a mate. Females of the species look completely different – they are all black with orange hairs confined to their hind legs.

Whilst bees dominate the list of pollinators, other species groups are present too – Bluebells are also pollinated by flies, beetles and butterflies.

The first non-bee on the list is a Click Beetle (*Agriotes pallidulus*). This species emerges from the soil in spring and, like the bee pollinators, feeds on a wide variety of flowers. These beetles are only present as adults for a short time – they are rarely seen after June.

Hoverflies are quite well represented with five species present - the most frequent visitor being the White-footed Hoverfly (*Platycheirus albimanus*). This small hoverfly with

grey-silver spots is on the wing from March to November, with peak numbers around May and early June.

In addition to providing a spectacular sensual display and food for early season insects Bluebells host a rust called Bluebell Rust (*Uromyces muscari*). Take a close look at the leaves and look for a circular pattern of black dots - if you find one you've almost certainly found Bluebell Rust!

So, come mid/late April when you are admiring that carpet of blue, pay a thought to the company you are keeping!



FIND OUT MORE

## Online

Bluebells are a feature of many of our ancient woodland nature reserves, discover more and find visiting information at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves). Plus, you can read our 'Top 5 Nature Reserves to See Bluebells' blog at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/nature-reserves-see-bluebells](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/nature-reserves-see-bluebells)



Before

Astonbury Wood Southern Glade - Before



After

Astonbury Wood Southern Glade - After

# Wilder Woodlands



Iain Ward is the Trust's new Wilder Woodlands Officer, with responsibility for delivering our Ancient Astonbury and Wilder Woodlands National Lottery Heritage Fund project for Astonbury Wood and six of our other key woodland sites - Balls Wood, Fir & Pond Woods, Gobions Wood, Old Park Wood, Long Deans and Longspring Wood.

"My new role is proving to be a fantastic opportunity for me to engage with local communities, and get people involved with the restoration of Astonbury Wood as an ancient semi-natural woodland, as well as supporting the Trust's work at other key woodland sites.

"At Astonbury I'm really looking forward to seeing what comes up in the glades we've brought back into management this winter. We've been coppicing Hazels to open up a temporary gap in the woodland canopy, allowing a greater number

of plant species to thrive for the next 3-5 years. Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, they've created deer baskets over the Hazel coppice stools to prevent browsing of the new growth. As a result of this work, we can expect to see more Cowslips and Primroses, Early Purple Orchids, Wood Avens, St John's Wort, Speedwell, Creeping Buttercup and Bluebell and, in the wetter areas, Small Teasel.

"We're already planning for next winter to make a careful start getting some areas of Hornbeam back into coppice rotation, and seeing what effect that has on diversity in the woodland!"

An important aim of the Wilder Woodlands project is to connect the community with our woodland sites and to encourage the involvement of volunteers in conserving them. Our first volunteer 'taster' session took place at Astonbury Wood in February and more will be planned in future. If you'd like to get involved, please email [HMWTReservesTeam@hmw.org](mailto:HMWTReservesTeam@hmw.org)

# Why we are felling trees - Ash dieback Disease

Ash dieback is a fungal disease that affects Ash trees and is sadly forecast to kill up to 90% of the UK's Ash population.

The Trust has a duty to ensure the safety of the public and for this reason is having to cut down terminally diseased trees close to roads and footpaths, which have or will become unsafe - heart-breaking for all of us but necessary.

Whilst the scars of this remedial work may make some of our sites look unsightly in the short term, there are some silver linings. Ash monoliths provide perfect bat roosts and perches for birds of prey, gathered piles of cut branches make deadwood piles that benefit beetles and other invertebrates, and nesting birds collect loose twigs from the ground – even the sawdust is recycled back into the earth!

To reduce the number of trees being felled, we are closing some lesser-used paths and allowing nature to take its course with infected trees. Please help us to minimise felling and keep yourself safe by staying on open paths.

It is worth remembering that our ancient woodlands date back to at least 1600 AD and are shaped by many different chapters of ecological history. As one species diminishes, another will thrive. We hope this provides you with a positive slant on what is, a truly sad, and, at times, messy disease.

Thank you for your understanding.



FIND OUT MORE

## Online

For more information about Ash-dieback disease, visit [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/ashdieback](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/ashdieback)



# Governing the future of the Trust

Peter Tallantire was voted in as Chair of Trustees at our AGM, last September, further to his election as a Trustee in 2020. Here, as we mark our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Peter tells us about his motivations for taking on a governance role at the Trust, and his thoughts and ambitions for the future.



I was born in the old county of Middlesex and brought up in Hertfordshire to love wildlife and the countryside around me – my mother was a big influence in that and together we would visit local farms, Whipsnade Zoo and animal sanctuaries.

My working career was spent in the Civil Service and I eventually spent 30 years working in the Cabinet Office, mainly on crisis management and response – an amazing privilege working with dedicated people to minimise harm, here and abroad. Although I retired from full time employment in 2022, I still work part time for the department.

As a welcome escape from the all-encompassing nature of the day job, we bought a smallholding in Redbourn, some 25 years ago. I am particularly proud of the diverse flora and fauna we have, with well over a thousand species recorded there so far!

Having lived in the region all my life, I wanted to do more to look after nature locally. I've been a member of the Trust and other local wildlife charities for many years and I was appointed as a Trustee in 2020. It was a great honour to be elected as Chair last year – the Trust is a wonderful organisation, caring

for some amazing places, with inspiring people fighting for nature every day! I see my role as supporting and advising

the executive team to deliver our shared vision and three key goals so that by 2030 we will see:

- More land in Hertfordshire and Middlesex being managed and protected for nature;
- More people standing up for wildlife and taking action for nature's recovery; and
- Nature playing a central and valued role in helping to address climate issues and people's health and wellbeing.

We have made tremendous progress already, which the recent purchase of two new nature reserves, Archers Green and Astonbury Wood attest to; however, there is still a long way to go and a growing list of challenges to be overcome, exemplified by the ongoing fight to protect Broadwater Lake SSSI from damaging development. Standing up for nature and caring for our reserves, takes people and money. So, it's a priority for me to ensure the Trust is on a sustainable financial footing, to meet the challenges ahead.

The most rewarding thing about being a Trustee is being able to help protect nature across our area. I can do a bit myself at home, but through the brilliant work of the Trust so much more can be achieved, whether it be making the case for nature, purchasing a new reserve, or looking after the land in our care. We are so much stronger and more effective together, not least as part of the wider family of Wildlife Trusts with nearly one million members and responsible for over 2,500 reserves across the country.



Astonbury Wood

It's amazing to think the Trust has grown from a small inaugural meeting, held in St Albans, back in 1964, to having over 23,000 members, more than 40 nature reserves, and is, rightly, highly respected as the leading voice for wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire and Middlesex. That is some achievement!

As for the future, the key for me is supporting nature's recovery. The Hertfordshire State of Nature Report provides a baseline on which to build. The Trust cannot reverse the declines on its own. And we cannot turn back the clock. Some species will be lost, others will arrive – even hopefully return. But through our three goals for 2030 and by working with others, we can ensure a positive future for wildlife locally and, hopefully, reconnect often isolated refuges into larger, thriving, ecosystems. To do this, the Trust needs to evolve too, not least to ensure we can continue to engage and enthuse our local communities.



Archers Green



Pond dipping © Penny Dixie

## Could you become a Trustee and help to make a Wilder Hertfordshire and Middlesex?

The Trust is committed to seeing more land in recovery for nature and more people taking action for wildlife. We recognise the importance of a healthy natural environment to people's wellbeing and to addressing climate impacts. We are looking for two exceptional people to join our Board of Trustees.

As a Trustee, you will join us as we celebrate 60 years of the Trust. So much has been achieved

over this time, but the need to stand up for wildlife is as important as ever, and your expertise will help achieve our strategic goals.

You would oversee our strategy, risk management and

financial sustainability, and be an advocate for the Trust, playing a vital role in influencing our supporters, partners, funders and key stakeholders. You will provide advice and support to the dedicated and highly skilled staff team who run the organisation day-to-day, stand up for nature, and deliver on our objectives. You will need to have a passion for ensuring a positive future for wildlife, and be able to think strategically. You will need to attend quarterly Council meetings and the AGM.

We are a welcoming and open organisation, committed to the principles of Equality Diversity and Inclusion. While all applications will be considered on merit, we would strongly encourage anyone from a minority background to consider applying as we need all perspectives if we are to succeed in our mission. More generally,

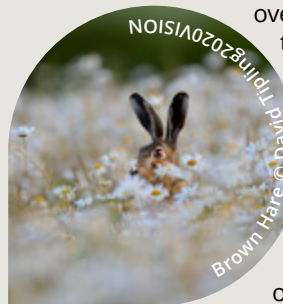
we would particularly like to hear from people who have skills in one or more of the following areas – ecology, land management, business development, and philanthropic giving.

Trustees can be appointed for up to three consecutive three-year terms. This is a voluntary role but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

If you'd like to help make a difference for wildlife in Herts and Middlesex as one of our Trustees, please contact Becky at [becky.vernon-clinch@hmwt.org](mailto:becky.vernon-clinch@hmwt.org) for an information pack.

Closing date: 9am on Monday 22 April  
Interviews will be held on Thursday 9 May.

Please visit our website for more information about the Trust – [www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk)



Brown Hare © David Nois



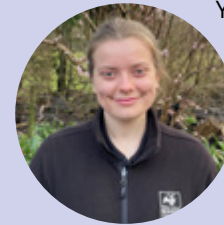


# Weird and Wonderful Wildlife

## Appreciating the nuances in nature

As the Trust celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we asked some of our team to pick a species that they would like to see appear in this feature and to tell us why. When you think about it, every species is unique and with that there's a vast range of fascinating behaviours to behold. Be prepared to be amazed!

### Orange-tip chosen by Fiona Wistow, Assistant Reserves Officer



You can see Orange-tip butterflies as a sign of spring flitting across gardens, over hedgerows and the greater countryside through to the summer. The male butterflies have bright orange wing tips while the females have striking black tips. Both share intricate camouflaged mottled-green underwings. Orange-tip caterpillars are cannibalistic so butterflies lay single eggs, on plants including Cuckooflower and Garlic Mustard, to prevent their offspring from eating each other. To survive winter, caterpillars morph into chrysalises and enter diapause - a period of suspended development, waiting for cold weather to kickstart the process to turn into their butterfly form. If the cold weather does not come, the chrysalis can wait in stasis (inactivity) until the next winter.

ascertained the Crow was 'anting'. This is a maintenance behaviour during which birds rub insects – and most usually ants – on their feathers and skin, either through picking them up in their bills and rubbing them on their bodies or lying in the insects where they exist in a dense population. It would seem that the insects secrete liquids which can act as an insecticide, miticide (to control mites and ticks), fungicide or bactericide, can make them more palatable by removing distasteful acid, or supplement the bird's own green oil. It's not just the Carrion Crow that does this, more than 200 other species are known to 'ant' too. I think this is just amazing and definitely weird and wonderful!



### Green Woodpecker chosen by Jess Pinches, Digital Communications Assistant

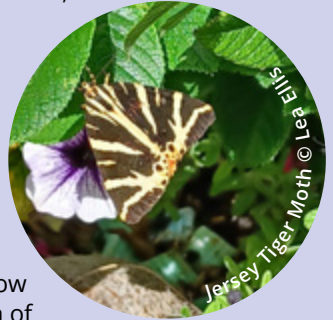
The species I have chosen is the Green Woodpecker. One standout feature is its exceptionally long tongue, which has to wrap around its skull to fit inside its head! They use these tremendous tongues to slurp up ants like our very own avian anteaters. I have fond memories of watching them probe the sandy cement between the paving of the driveway of my childhood home and hearing their laugh-like call.

What's more, these brilliant birds are ecosystem engineers. Lots of different animals like to live in holes in trees and as woodpeckers rarely return to the same nest this helps create homes for other creatures.

### Jersey Tiger Moth chosen by Lea Ellis, Wilder Communities Officer



I was thrilled to see this striking and scarce moth in my North Herts garden last summer, settling on a Petunia. For something so delicate and beautiful, it's not fussy about where it gets its food from! Common and White Dead Nettles, Dandelion, Plantain and Bramble, all generally considered to be weeds are culinary favourites, which is another reason to allow a small patch of your garden to go wild. They are so pretty, and I love that they live on 'junk food'! For me, butterflies and moths remind of us of what we can become.



### What do you think is weird and wonderful?

We hope this article inspires you to think about some of the extraordinary ways our wildlife feed, live and survive. Please do give us your nomination for a species that you believe is truly weird and wonderful and let us share it with our community by tagging us **@hertswildlifetrust** on Instagram and Facebook, and **@HMWTBadger** on Twitter, or email us at **media@hmwt.org**



FIND OUT MORE

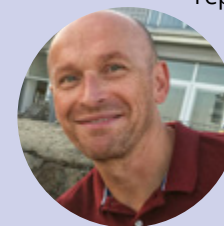
### Online

Discover more about our weird and wonderful wildlife with our species finder at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer)



### Carrion Crow chosen by Andy Taylor, Business Support Assistant

My nomination is for the Carrion Crow. This stems from an enquiry I fielded last year, where someone reported seeing crows flapping their wings on the ground, atop an Ant's nest and wondered what was going on. With a bit of help from the team (and the internet), we





## Empowering schools to look after nature

This spring we are launching our brand-new Wilder Schools Programme. With over 600 schools across our counties, there is enormous potential for their grounds to provide connected wildlife corridors and safe habitats across our landscapes. Not to mention the opportunities for young people to build a connection to nature and learn outside of the classroom. So many schools are doing such a lot already and here are just some stories from young people and teachers already on their Wilder School journey ...



### Westfield Academy, Watford

"At Westfield Academy, Eco Club members are doing various activities to improve the environment around our school. This involved planting trees and spring bulbs, building our own vibrant bug hotel and litter picking around the site, picking up almost 5kg of rubbish! Another activity that we enjoyed was setting up camera traps and seeing the wildlife that live at our school."

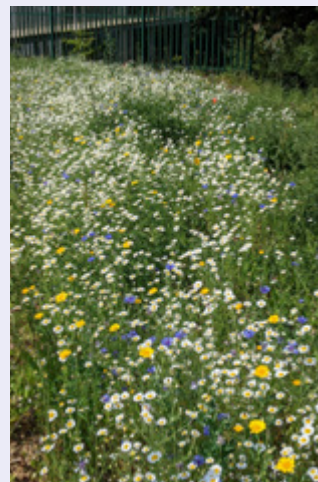


On site, we will also be building vegetable patches to grow our own food, and will build a pond to attract and support other aquatic organisms on site."

*Written by students Mia, James, Sophia, Sabahat, Sarah, Noah, Angel, Ocean, Shifa, Rafia, Prasna, Maria, Rushi, Summer and Ms Cooke*

### Hitchin Girls' School

"At Hitchin Girls' School, Eco Club have been working very hard to make our school environment more sustainable and biodiverse. We have done this by planting wildflowers, including cornflowers, poppies and daisies. This attracted a variety of insects including butterflies and bees as well as bringing smiles to students as they walked past!"



One exciting project we are working towards is making a pond. Also, we planted a vegetable patch containing lots of different species of plants like runner beans, tomatoes, courgettes, and potatoes. We are excited to continue this work and do more in the future."

*Written by students Becky and Eleanor*



### Cranborne Primary School, Potters Bar

"We've held two community events over half term to clear and start building new projects around our pond area. There's still a lot to do but we've made a good start."

We've had a donation of logs and stumps from our neighbour who had a few trees felled and a local gardening company who donated a wildflower meadow and four native trees. We also held another Big Dig community event. The children loved being involved. We've created a Wild Book Nook with donations of stumps from our neighbours."

*Written by teacher, Lucy Holt*



## Get started!

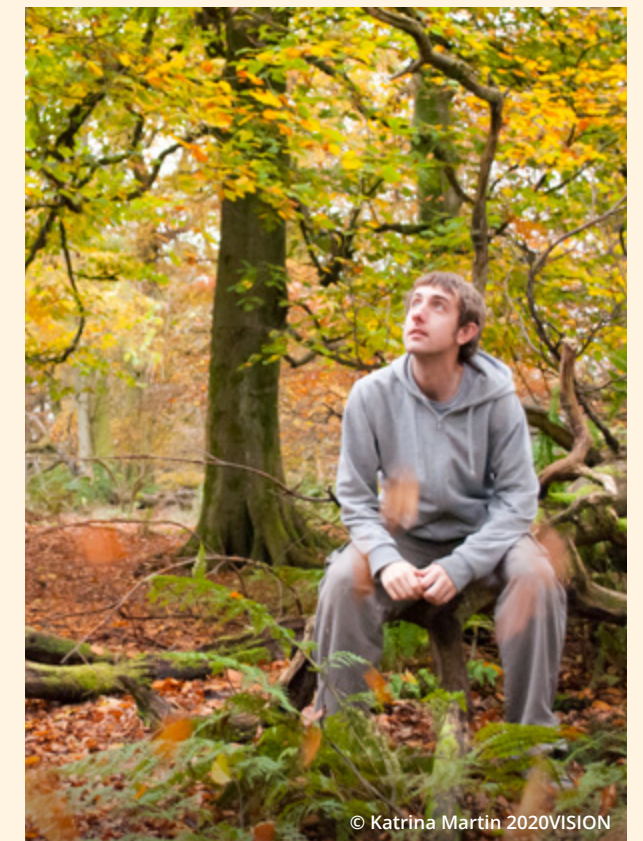
There are many low-cost ideas for making changes to school grounds and schools can get a class, Eco Club or entire community involved. All actions big or small help local wildlife and help our young people build a connection to nature.

As part of our Wilder Schools Programme launch, we have a team of brilliant Wilder Schools Champions that can visit your local school and provide bespoke and expert advice on how the grounds can be improved for wildlife and learning. If your local school would like to book a visit from one of our Champs, or for any other advice or support to help you on your Wilder School journey, please get in touch at [wildersupport@hmwt.org](mailto:wildersupport@hmwt.org) or visit our Wilder Learning pages at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-communities/learning](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-communities/learning)

**One Quick Win for you!**

## Hitting Mung – staring into stillness

In Korea, there is a term *hitting mung* with the word mung meaning 'emptiness' or 'nothingness'. This activity is simply looking at nature. Why not give it a go? Sit on a bench, sit in the woods, lean against a tree or look over a pond or lake and just stare. Stare at the trees, at the sky, or at the body of water. This activity is practised because of the belief that when you immerse yourself in nature it is possible to find stillness in yourself.



© Katrina Martin 2020VISION



FIND OUT MORE

### Online

Discover many more ways nature can benefit your wellbeing at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing)



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

# Our Wild Supporters

## Your membership matters

We couldn't do our work without the support of our wonderful members like you. We have a fantastic community of local people all working to help wildlife – and we want to share your stories.



### Meet Liz Smith

I joined to support the Trust about 15 years ago. I was coming out of Waitrose, talked to a recruiter and thought I should become a member to support wildlife locally. I am a very keen birdwatcher and whenever I walk I take binoculars with me as you never know what you might spot! I have always had a keen interest in wildlife since I was young, my father was a keen bird watcher and I used to go out and about with him.

As well as being a member of the Trust, I am a volunteer in the Grebe House Wildlife Garden in Verulamium Park. I undertake regular and seasonal garden maintenance, including weeding, pruning, tidying up and planting new areas. I also volunteer in the office helping the Membership Team.

### Fantastic Fundraisers

The fantastic Amelia (aged 8) and Isabelle (aged 5) raised £52 to help local wildlife. They used the dried lavender in the autumn to make 50 dried lavender bags. They then sold these to neighbours, family and friends. Thank you for your brilliant idea and hard work fundraising!



### Meet Christine Henry

My name is Christine Henry and my employer Viatrix allow us to nominate charities to receive a small donation.

I nominated Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust because of the difference wildlife and nature has made to my life over the past 12 months. I am a carer for my husband, I work and have children. Life has not been a bed of roses. I'm not afraid to admit that I was in "self-destruct" mode for quite some years.

That was, until last Summer when I bought a camera, ventured out and discovered some of the Trust's wonderful nature reserves - Lemsford Springs, Amwell, Gobions Wood, Cassiobury Park and my favourite, Rye Meads. I quickly became a member, and I am now a completely different person. I am far less stressed, I am happier and healthier, and have so much to live for and so much to see.

I am so grateful for all the wonderful work that the Trust and its volunteers do to help save **our very precious wildlife and its habitats**. I wanted to be able to give something back!

**Do you have a friend that loves and wants to support wildlife? Why not buy them the gift of a wilder future by giving them a gift membership. Visit [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/shop](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/shop)**



## You helped keep bats flying high

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Big Give bats appeal. Your generosity meant that we reached our campaign target and raised over £13,900! This money will help fund vital work to protect and restore the habitats that bats rely upon. Thanks also to our generous match funders, Home Farm Glamping and Friends of Stocker's Lake, and to the Reed Foundation who doubled your donations up to the target.

## In remembrance

We would like to thank Peter Stevenson, Gerald Thurlow and Jean Morrison Neal for kindly leaving a gift to the Trust in their will, and for the family of Paul Burt for directing a donation to the Trust from his legacy. We are extremely grateful to all of them for supporting the Trust in this special way.

Thank you to the friends and family of Jonathan Day, Violet Dyer, Sonia Jean Hearn, Peter Osborne and Paul Tatman 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.



## Thank you for your survey responses

Last summer, we sent out a wildlife survey to a sample of people in Hertfordshire and Middlesex. Thank you to those of you who took the time to send in your responses. **Your input about the wildlife you love is invaluable in helping us plan for the future.** The survey showed us how much local people care about the wildlife around them and the importance of conservation activities.

Local people told us that they would like us to work to protect Hedgehogs, bees, butterflies, birds, wildflowers and lots more. And that is just what we will do! In 2024 we will be working hard to create a world where wildlife has space to thrive and our precious habitats and species populations are recovering.

## Play our weekly lottery



### Support Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and win up to £25,000

The prize draw takes place every Friday and each entry is £1. For every entry, at least 50p comes back to the Trust to support our work caring for wildlife across our two counties.

For information on how to play and the full terms and conditions please visit [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/lottery](https://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/lottery)

GambleAware

unity



1ST PRIZE  
**£25,000**  
Match 6 numbers

2ND PRIZE  
**£1,000**  
Match 5 numbers

3RD PRIZE  
**£25**  
Match 4 numbers



# What's On

We've already got lots of exciting events scheduled for spring and into early summer 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.

Many of our events are free to attend and lots 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.

## April

- 5 April**      **Spring Smartphone Safari**, Grebe House, St Albans
- 8 April**      **Creatures of the Night**, Panshanger Park
- 9 April**      **Family Willow Weaving**, Panshanger Park
- 26 April**     **Home Farm Glamping Bat Walk**, Home Farm Glamping, Elstree
- 29 April**     **Bluebell Walk**, Astonbury Wood, near Stevenage

## May

- 4 May**      **Dawn Chorus at King's Meads**, Ware

- 8 May**      **Home Farm Glamping Bat Walk**, Home Farm Glamping, Elstree
- 12 May**     **Nature Writing Workshop**, Triangle Garden, Hitchin
- 14 May**     **Tree Gall Identification**, Online talk
- 25 May**     **Dragonfly Walk at Panshanger Park**, Hertford

## June

- 1 June**      **Discover Hedgehogs**, Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary, Harpenden
- 7-9 June**   **Sustainability Festival Expo**, Alban Arena, St Albans - Come and see us at this community event!
- 11 June**     **Introduction to King's Meads**, Guided Walk, Ware

## July

- 13 July**     **Wildfest**, Cassiobury Park, Watford



### Could you help us to run events and work with communities?

Our Engagement Volunteer roles are varied from helping to run guided walks or giving talks to community groups and schools, to running childrens' and family activities or helping us at our larger events like Wildfest. Our broad programme of events is only made possible with the help of a wonderful team of volunteers, so if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please find out more here at [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering](http://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering)



FIND OUT MORE

### Online

Find out more about our events programme and book [hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events](http://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/events)

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