

Wild

Leicestershire
and Rutland

Membership magazine

Winter/Spring 2020



Back to a wilder future

Simon Bentley & John Clarkson
look at the past and future of
Leicestershire and Rutland's wildlife

Wet, wet, wet

From wild winter walks to
managing floods naturally

Meet our new CEO

We welcome Tim Graham from
Manx Wildlife Trust



**Leicestershire
& Rutland**

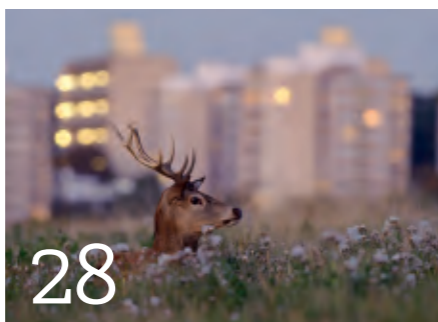
Wildlife Trust

Welcome to your Wild Leicestershire & Rutland

We hope you enjoy your 36 page membership magazine. All the local news and features from your Wildlife Trust, plus national news and stories from Wildlife Trusts around the UK. Thank you for your support!

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Feed the birds this winter with Vine House Farm

As winter progresses, small birds must work harder to find food. A short spell of cold, harsh weather can prove fatal, as they may struggle to find enough food to keep warm through the night. By providing the right type of foods in the right feeders, you can make a huge difference.

Blackbirds and robins love ground feeding trays with sunflower hearts, husk-free mixes and suet pellets, whilst finches, like chaffinch or even brambling can be attracted with a plentiful supply of seed either on trays or hanging feeders.

When you buy bird food and other supplies from Vine House Farm, 4% of your purchase will be donated to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, and if you're a new customer they will also give an extra £10! Last year Vine House Farm donated around £3,000 to the Trust to help support our work.

See a full range of products in the enclosed Vine House Farm flier or visit vinehousefarm.co.uk

Chaffinch © Fergus Gill/2020Vision



I can't wait to see in 2020 in Leicestershire and Rutland. I have settled in with such a warm welcome and I'm astonished daily by the great work of our staff and volunteers. I'm joining Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust from the Manx Wildlife Trust, and there are some big differences - most obviously being surrounded by the bustle of the city, rather than the lull of the sea! That said, many issues are the same, and I have moved here having successfully negotiating

with government to improve farming subsidies for wildlife, setting out a national framework to deliver conservation, and increasing the presence of the Trust in the community.

Something stood out when I came for interview; the staff, volunteers and trustees gave me a sense of positive direction, which couples well with a famous history of conservation success. We need more of that ambition, alongside our existing amazing work as we look to the future.



The climate and ecological emergencies demand urgent action and we are already playing our part.

We are at a time of challenge and opportunity. 2020 will see a new agenda to generate international targets for the next ten years, hopefully building a new culture that will deliver the start of nature's recovery. Just imagine a Wilder Future where nature-based solutions help manage flooding and store carbon; the NHS uses nature to prevent illness and increase recovery times; any new development is net positive for wildlife; and all this enables investment to secure our environment. Viable populations of wildlife will burst from our nature reserves to move across Leicestershire and Rutland's landscapes - and beyond. People will be able to connect closer every day to our wildlife and society will truly care. I can't wait to get stuck in and thank you for your ongoing support.

Tim Graham, CEO

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

Working to protect and enhance the wildlife and wild places of Leicestershire and Rutland and to engage people with nature.

Our vision is for a Living Landscape rich in wildlife, valued and enjoyed by all.

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Wild is the membership magazine for Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and is free to members.

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor, Director or the Council of the Trust. Articles, letters, photographs and artwork are welcomed on the understanding that no liability for their safe custody or return is incurred and the right to abridge or refuse publication is reserved.

Editor Lucy McRobert. Designer Yarwood Associates. Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Front cover: Fieldfare © Richard Steel/2020Vision

Membership Recruiters needed!

We have an exciting opportunity to join us as a Membership Recruiter. This flexible job is a great way to support local wildlife and the local environment, while supplementing your income.

Find out more and apply at wildlifefundraising.org



Recruitment © LRWT



Teal of approval from wildlife presenter

Wildlife presenter Nick Baker swooped into Rutland Water Nature Reserve in September to meet our young Osprey Ambassadors and open the new Teal hide at Lyndon. The Teaching, Education and Learning hide will serve as an outdoor classroom - introducing future generations to the wonders of natural history.

The hide was the result of a generous donation from Peter Cox, on behalf of his father, Dennis, and the hard work of the staff and volunteers of the Reserve's Hide Building Team:

"Dennis was an avid bird watcher and member of the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust" said Peter, "He enjoyed regular weekly visits to the reserve up until

he was no longer able to drive. I am certain that he would be proud to see what has been created here to help encourage the next generation."

A sun-drenched afternoon of bird-themed activities ensued, courtesy of the Osprey Education Team, while Zeiss kindly sponsored binoculars for everyone. Bunting and cake were the order of the day, thanks to the culinary skills of Liz Elsdon and artistic touches from Libby Smith.

Nick tried his hand at the Osprey Migration Game, and returned later in the evening to deliver a talk to a centre packed with Wildlife Trust Volunteers on "How to Rewild Yourself".

Teal Hide opening © Pete Murray

A new era for our website

In mid-January, we'll be saying goodbye to our old LRWT website and ushering in a new online era for the Trust. The new website will be easier to use and navigate, as well as looking fresh, modern and full of interesting, useful information. It will match our partner Wildlife Trusts across

the UK, too, using the same template and appearance. We're also bringing in several other websites under one united banner, including Rutland Water Nature Reserve, the Rutland Ospreys, Wild Forest School and Wild Lives (don't worry - the web addresses will all stay the same). We hope that this will give the Trust more presence online with members and new supporters, and that you like our new look! Thank you for your support.

Visit lrwt.org.uk from mid-January.

Twenty years with LRWT

Beverley Heath has retired from her role as the Trust's Communications Officer. She joined the Trust back in 1999 and for the first 11 years undertook a combined role of Membership and Communications Officer, co-ordinating administration of the Trust's membership as well as overseeing communication of the Trust's work and key messages - a considerable task!

In recent years Beverley has been able to focus on communications and particularly the production of the Trust's various regular publications, including regular membership magazines, annual reports and numerous leaflets, newsletters, brochures and appeals.



Most recently she has overseen the upgrade and update of our *Nature Reserves Guide* with full colour maps and photographs plus comprehensive, clearly presented information. Another significant task was the redesign of the Trust's membership magazine incorporating local news and articles with national updates and features from The Wildlife Trusts (previously *Natural World*).

Beverley has made a valuable contribution to the work of the Trust over many years, evidenced by regular positive comments and feedback from members and supporters saying how much they enjoy our informative and interesting publications.

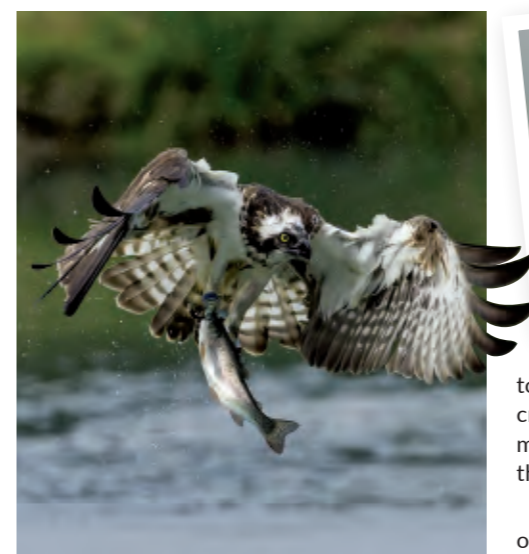
We wish her a long and very happy retirement.



Beverley Heath © LRWT



Record-breaking year for Rutland's Ospreys



23 years since the Rutland Osprey Project began, the ospreys continue to surprise.

2019 has been a year of record-breaking statistics for the Rutland Ospreys - beginning with a record high for breeding pairs. 10 pairs successfully bred this year (compared to eight pairs in recent years), meaning Rutland has the largest osprey colony in the UK outside Scotland. More chicks fledged this year than ever before, with a total of 23 (compared

to a previous record of 16). This bumper crop allowed the project to celebrate the milestone of the 150th chick to hatch since the project began.

Another terrific surprise was the discovery of four chicks in a single nest. This is the first time this has occurred in Rutland. It was all the more rewarding and satisfying that this nest of four was in Manton Bay - home of our osprey webcam on Rutland Water nature reserve. People from all over the world watched as the four chicks hatched, flourished and fledged in the summer.

The success of the Osprey Project would not have been possible without the hard work of volunteers and staff. We look forward to the ospreys returning in the spring.

The Rutland Osprey Project is a partnership between Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust and Anglian Water.

2019 osprey season in numbers:

- 10 breeding pairs
- 23 chicks fledged
- 4 chicks to a nest - for the first time!
- 150th chick to hatch from the Rutland Osprey Project
- 3,064 young people aged 6-16 engaged in nature
- 19 schools and colleges visited by the osprey education team
- 25 school & educational groups visited Rutland Water nature reserve



Osprey with trout © John Wright. Osprey webcam stills © LRWT

Exciting Times for Spiders in Leicestershire and Rutland

2019 proved an excellent year for spider scientists in Leicestershire and Rutland, with the discovery of a new species at two separate locations – including a LRWT nature reserve!

Dr Alan Cann is county co-ordinator for VC55 (Leicestershire and Rutland) and made the discovery on 29th August at Lyddington Meadow: "There is a long tradition of biological recording in VC55 and we probably know more about our spiders than any other county. The "Common Candy-striped Spider" *Enoplognatha ovata* is one of our most frequently occurring, but it's close relative, *Enoplognatha latimana*, has never been recorded here - at least not before 2019!"



However, Dr Cann had already found the species – he just didn't realise it at first. "After a few days of basking in a self-satisfied glow, it occurred to me to check my specimen backlog. I discovered that on 3rd August at Ketton Quarry, I had collected another *E. latimana* specimen - the first actual VC55 record for this species."

"At least two other species have now been recorded just across the County border in Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire, too. These are the unmistakable Wasp Spider, *Argiope bruennichi*, and the green-fanged tube web spider *Segestria florentina*. Many species are expanding north west due to our changing climate."

Ketton Quarry (Andy Lear). Common Candy-striped Spider © Alan McCann.



Three quarters of crops and 87% of all plants require insect-pollination, yet insects are dying out up to eight times faster than larger animals and 41% of insect species face extinction. In fact, "we are witnessing the largest extinction event on Earth since the dinosaurs".

Can you help us stop this by taking **Action for Insects**? Habitat loss and chronic exposure to pesticides are two major causes of this looming catastrophe. In a new report by Professor Dave Goulson, he summarises evidence of insect loss and what he thinks must happen to reverse the decline. It's not too late.

We can change the future of insects by taking two simple actions:

Stop killing insects by reducing our use of pesticides where we live, work and farm

Start to create more insect-friendly habitats in towns, cities and the countryside.

When you sign up to take **Action for Insects**, we will send you two guides to help you go chemical-free and create insect friendly havens where you live.

Sign up at lrwt.org.uk

Ladybird on fungus © Paul Hobson



A sad farewell

Ralph Johnson, one of our long standing volunteers and members sadly passed away in October after a long illness.

Ralph established the Holwell Wildlife Group in 1974 and helped the Trust acquire our Holwell reserves during the 1970s, where he was volunteer warden for 40 years. He set up our Melton Local Volunteer Group in 1980 and served on the Conservation Committee and as a trustee on the Trust Council for many years.

He also gave numerous talks, hosted regular badger watching evenings and organised the annual Holwell reserve open day. Ralph's unstinting and inspirational support was recognised in two awards – he was received the Leicestershire First Environment Award in 2009 and the Melton Times Community Environment Award in 2016.

Ralph made a significant, valuable and lasting contribution to the work of the Trust over many years and will be missed. Our thoughts are with his friends and family.



Melissa Harrison

Connect with winter this year

When I lived in a city, winter didn't mean much more than a warmer coat for my commute. Now I live in a rural village it seems darker, longer and colder, but also more interesting, with so much to observe and take pleasure in. The slow cycle of the seasons is now a central part of my life.

These days nearly 90 per cent of us live in urban areas where, unless we get outdoors and immerse ourselves in nature, seasonal changes are much less noticeable than in the countryside. But while insulating ourselves from the colder months with 24/7 street lighting and temperature-controlled offices may be convenient, it comes at a cost. Our bodies and minds evolved in nature, alert to its cycles. Studies have shown that part of the brain knows what time of year it is outside and adjusts our immune system and metabolism accordingly, even if the subjects involved are entirely protected from seasonal cues.

It's only very recently in evolutionary terms that we've started spending so much time indoors; just a blink of an aeon, in fact. Perhaps that's why forging a year-round connection to nature can prove so rewarding, because it's something our brains have evolved over millennia to do. Tuning in to cyclical events like the slow ripening of apples, the blossoming of ivy flowers providing late food for bees, the shy eruption of mushrooms among the leaf litter or the peeping calls of redwings migrating over cities after dark – these things root

us in time as well as place, creating a feeling of connection that becomes stronger, more rewarding and more enriching with every passing year.

There's a good case to be made for spending daily time outdoors in nature, whatever the weather (within reason!) and all times of the year. Perhaps it's a lunchtime stroll that takes in your local green space, an evening run around a nature reserve or a new morning route to the bus stop that takes you across a nearby common: build it into your routine and you'll soon feel the benefits. Having a dog is a great motivator; any owner will tell you the benefits to body and mind that come from taking their four-legged friend out every day – even if they may grumble a little on rainy mornings!

Watching even the humblest place change through all four seasons will lead you to know it intimately, a deep, atavistic pleasure that connects us to our past and helps prepare us for an uncertain future, too. The more connected we are to our environment, the more likely we are to protect it – so when the days draw in, keep going out; keep looking, keep listening, keep loving the natural world.

Go wild this winter From bugling cranes to bubbling brent geese, there's a world of wild wonders to get you outside this winter. Find your next adventure at wildlifetrusts.org/winter-wildlife

A LITTLE BIT WILD

Study the seasons

Phenology is the study of cyclical natural phenomena. Several projects record sightings from citizen scientists, so you can contribute to these valuable, long-running studies of nature. Visit wildlifetrusts.org/citizen-science

Melissa Harrison is a nature writer and novelist, and editor of the anthologies *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn* and *Winter*, produced in support of The Wildlife Trusts.

Illustration: Robin Mackenzie



Back to a wilder future

Simon Bentley looks back on his 19-year tenure as Director of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust Director, whilst new Head of Conservation John Clarkson looks at what the next twenty years could bring.

I clearly remember my first day in post as Director of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust – 1st March 2001. As I walked through the front door of the office, conservation staff were on their way out to close many of our nature reserves to public access, due to the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. A sobering start. Luckily, things were set to get better.

Bringing back nature

A month or so after starting, we launched a major project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore and enhance the natural heritage of 18 of the Trust's nature reserves. This focussed on restoring sites of highest wildlife value to their full natural potential and ensuring they could be more easily maintained in the future. The project delivered a step-change in improving the management of our nature reserves.

Then in June 2001, the Rutland Osprey Project, in partnership with Anglian Water, saw the hatching of an osprey chick at Rutland Water Nature Reserve – the first in central England for 150 years. The Rutland ospreys have since gone from strength-to-strength,

with 10 nests this year fledging 23 chicks, bringing the total to 170 chicks fledged since 2001. A further reintroduction project commenced in the spring of 2011, with captive bred water voles released at Rutland Water and the nearby Oakham Canal. Monitoring work shows encouraging signs of dispersal and breeding, so we truly have re-established Ratty in Rutland.

A personal highlight has been supporting the Trust's long-term vision of managing an extensive area of the River Soar floodplain for the benefit of wildlife and people. This received a boost in 2004, when we acquired two extensive wetland areas at Cossington Meadows and Wanlip Meadows, followed by additional sites over the next few years. Wetland creation and enhancement has been undertaken and they have developed into important wildlife havens, much-loved by locals and visitors.



Upper Marsh at Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve (Simon Bentley/LRWT).
Trust Director Simon Bentley welcomes new Head of Conservation John Clarkson at Holwell Nature Reserves. Water vole (www.davidjslater.co.uk)



Map: this material has been reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:10000 Scale Raster with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. OS Licence No. 100039440.

It has been rewarding to see Rutland Water Nature Reserve expand significantly with the completion of the Rutland Water Habitats Project in 2011. This created nine new lagoons on the nature reserve, which increased by 98 hectares to nearly 400 hectares. From our biggest to our smaller reserves, living in Market Harborough I was thrilled to be closely involved in the creation of Fox Wood at the nearby village of Lubenham. More than 100 local people turned out in February 2018 to help plant 1,500 native UK broadleaf trees and shrubs in a wonderful community effort.



Inspiring people

The annual Birdfair is a big feature of the calendar. Weather conditions have been challenging at times, and none more so than the year just gone, with the Birdfair team performing heroics to deliver another safe and successful event despite the rain and mud! We celebrated the 30th Birdfair in 2018 by raising more than £5m for international nature conservation projects. →



The community tree planting turned into a family event for a number of the volunteers. Above left, Simon Bentley. Photographs: Tony Clarke. The Trust is proud of the Rutland Osprey Project's successful reintroduction of ospreys to central England. Male 51(11) (John Wright/LRWT). The completed Rutland Water Habitats (Frank Pickering). The numerous events and lectures at the 25th proved more popular than ever (LRWT) and there were plenty of activities to engage children (Eric Renno).





Sir David Attenborough cuts the ribbon to officially open the Volunteer Training Centre (and guests arrive at the new centre (Beverley Heath/LRWT). The Trust's new Volunteer Training Centre at Rutland Water (Corporate Architecture).



I was with the Trust when it celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006, with a variety of activities, including the official opening of Cossington Meadows by Sir David Attenborough; and in 2016, celebrate its 60th anniversary with a 'Secret Wild' art exhibition at Leicester Guildhall, featuring inspiring work from our 36 nature reserves and enjoyed by 1,300 visitors.

I have had an amazing time at the Trust and feel very thankful to have worked alongside so many skilled, knowledgeable and committed members, supporters, volunteers and staff. I am proud of everything that we have achieved together, but acutely aware of all there is still to do. One thing I am sure of, is that the team at Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust is fully skilled, committed and ready for the challenges ahead.

Litter pickers at Mountsorrel Meadows Nature Reserve (Nick Crowley), Sunday volunteers at Ulverscroft (Morag Scott Porteous/LRWT), Wild Tots pre-school group (Rock Kitchen Harris), Wild Forest School gives children the chance to explore outdoors. (LRWT)



Volunteers provide vital support to the Trust and undertake a huge range of tasks. Early on in my time, we established a new roving nature reserve volunteer group, which has provided significant additional resource for practical nature conservation tasks, including heathland habitat restoration in the Charnwood Forest and woodland management work, particularly within the Leighfield Forest. One of the most demanding yet satisfying projects to work on was the construction of our Volunteer Training Centre at Rutland Water. It was opened by our Patron, Sir David Attenborough, in July 2015, providing training facilities for volunteers of all ages and backgrounds.

In 2009, we launched an Outreach Education Programme for primary school children to bring the natural world into schools, the focus of which is currently Forest School. It's been a privilege to watch this work develop and also see youngsters enjoy Wildlife Watch activities, teenagers get involved with our Wild Skills group, 18-30-year olds join our Wild Horizons initiative, and around 50 trainees participate in our Trainee Reserve Officer scheme.

John Clarkson takes up the story...

The scale of the challenge

"I want you to act as if the house is on fire, because it is." – Greta Thunberg

Despite the fantastic work being done by farmers, ecologists, engineers and people like you in your own homes, the state of the world is such that a third of our land and three quarters of our freshwater is used for producing food for humans, urban areas have more than doubled since 1992 and greenhouse gas emissions have doubled since 1980. We are becoming aware of the magnitude of the damage that we have wrought on the natural world: recent stories include a 75% decline in insect biomass in protected areas in Germany over the last 27 years, for instance.

What's more, we could face an unprecedented challenge in the next twenty years: the global human population may reach 9 billion by 2040, and by 2050 there may be a doubling or tripling of total material consumption – the more materials we consume, the less space is left for wildlife.

This is not sustainable and whilst it may be easy to dismiss these as global issues there are equivalent trends much closer to home, right here in Leicestershire and Rutland. If we continue to use the environment in the way that we currently do, then in 2040 lapwing and curlew will be at best occasional winter visitors to our farmland, swifts won't scream above our heads and grey wagtails won't bob along our rivers.

If this becomes a reality, we will have created a world bereft of awe and wonder and a society rife with health problems – because we will have lost the nature that underpins our communities, our happiness and wellbeing.



"I want you to act as if the house is on fire, because it is." – Greta Thunberg



My fear is that as a society we lack the belief that we need to change and that we lack the courage to make that change; the real challenge may be that we simply cannot comprehend the scale and the urgency of the difference we need to make. Some things need to happen before 2025, not 2040, if we are to leave the next generation with an environment even similar to our own, and it will be down to all of us to make a difference at every level. For example, we probably don't need to produce more food - we need to tackle overconsumption, waste less of what we grow and be smarter in how we grow it. We can do this by working with nature - by paying land managers to deliver not just food, but goods and services such as cleaner air and water, richer soils and more diverse landscapes and more wildlife.

Dreaming of a wilder future

The world of wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland will be different as a result of the choices that we all make over the next 20 years. Yet, there could be a wilder future to look forward to. By 2040, we might see a local landscape with white storks, common cranes, black kites, long-tailed blue butterflies, white-tailed sea eagles and European beavers. Alongside targeted reintroductions across the UK, these species have an opportunity to colonise naturally, as the result of the climate being different, our food production being different, and our

housing and living spaces being different. If we make the right choices, this could be our future.

In my first few months at Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, I have been invigorated and inspired by the vision, commitment and tenacity of people like yourself; of dedicated, lifelong conservationists like Simon Bentley and Tim Appleton; and all our volunteers and staff. There is a commitment at all levels, and in the wider Wildlife Trust movement too, to building a nature recovery network that links up wild areas and brings resilience to our landscapes in face of climate change; to return insects, birds and mammals to abundant levels; to reconnect people to nature for their health, happiness and wellbeing.

The United Nations have declared the next decade as the Decade of Ecological Restoration. With the emerging movements led by Greta Thunberg, Wild Justice and Extinction Rebellion, we have an opportunity like never before to mobilise and make a change – and millions of people have started to do so. Your Wildlife Trust, and its staff, volunteers and members like you, have a critical role to play; we will never be more relevant. I hope we can all enjoy this vision for the wildlife and people of Leicestershire and Rutland and I want to thank you for your support as we look towards a wilder future. 🍀

White-tailed eagle and White stork (Amy Lewis)
Male Adonis blue butterfly (Colin Williams)

The Badgers of Belvoir

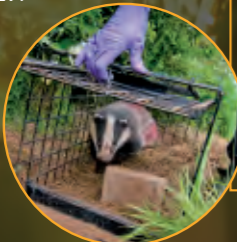
John Bristow, Conservation Officer for the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust reflects on the highs and lows of five years of the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme.

In 2013, we began a programme of vaccinating badgers against Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB). Since the 1980s, bTB has been progressing north-east across the UK from initial infections of cattle in the south-west. Our scheme is part of a programme partially funded by DEFRA, targeting badger populations on the leading edge of the disease. We, alongside other Wildlife Trusts and partners, believe that vaccination is a more humane, cost-effective and practical solution to controlling bTB in badgers than culling, and our project sits alongside sister projects in the UK, known as the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme. This has helped fund projects in this 'edge' area, including in Leicestershire, Rutland and Nottinghamshire.

The first three years saw staff and volunteers work alongside a team of contractors. 2013 saw sixteen adults and two cubs vaccinated over two nights in 2014; fourteen adults trapped and no recaptures in 2015; and 2016 saw nine adults and a single cub trapped. As local knowledge suggested the badger population to be stable, we found the results unusual and slightly disappointing, but perhaps it was just a good year for foraging elsewhere.

In late 2017, following a two-year hiatus due to a global vaccine shortage, we teamed up with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, who were undertaking a similar scheme in the Vale of Belvoir, a 'stone's throw' from our original project area. By pooling resources, we were able to undertake a further two years of vaccination, extending the project to 2019.

In 2018, over the course of the two nights 13 adults and 2 cubs were trapped and vaccinated. We were caught out however, by one particularly cheeky badger! We look for



areas with high evidence of badger activity to deploy our traps, so that we can maximise the number of badgers we catch. There was evidence of very high activity in one area, and yet we only saw one badger caught and vaccinated. This badger was then recaptured on the second night - so all the 'activity' was a single greedy badger!

In our final year, we were keen to have maximum impact. Local knowledge implied that the local population had reduced, or was certainly less active. We widened the search for activity, followed by meticulous recording of activity in the days leading up to vaccination dates.

This resulted in a total of sixteen badgers trapped and vaccinated over the two nights; four adults and nine cubs on the first night followed by two adults and one cub on the second along with five recaptures. It was particularly rewarding to vaccinate such a high number of cubs, as they will carry this vaccination into adulthood. The recaptures showed a lot more traffic between the setts than was originally expected, showing the impact that vaccination might have in preventing the spread of the disease, especially in this small, but strategic, area of Leicestershire.

Thank you to those who assisted with this project.

The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust vaccination project in the Vale of Belvoir is set to continue until at least 2022, so for more details check out: nottinghamshirewildlife.org/badger-vaccinations-campaign



Year	Adults Vaccinated	Cubs Vaccinated	Total
2013	16	2	18
2014	14	0	14
2015	9	1	10
2018	13	2	15
2019	6	10	16
			73

Vaccination © Tom Marshall.
Badger © Andrew Parkinson/2020Vision.



Enjoy a wild walk this winter at Cossington Meadows

Cossington Meadows began its life as a nature reserve in 2002, and since then nature has reclaimed what was once a barren and scarred landscape. Chris Hill, Conservation Officer takes you on a walk through wetlands this winter...

Enter the reserve at the kissing gate on Syston Road, head through the next gate and continue until you reach a wide expanse now partially wooded with willows ①.

This was once reminiscent of the moon's surface. Gravel and other aggregates were piled up when the site was a working quarry and in dry windy weather the air was thick with dust. Bee orchids appeared here for the first time in summer 2019. There are four grass snake hibernaculum. Three of these are underground, whilst the pile of woodchip covers a maze of used tyres and branches: the above-ground hibernaculum.

Go through the next two kissing gates walking east towards Cossington and into

Rectory Marsh ②, a low-lying marshy meadow with several scrapes. Garganey and a glossy ibis have been seen on the large scrape, and redshank have bred here. We do not own this bit of land, but the habitat was created in partnership with the previous landowner.

Progress through the gate in the corner ③ and walk around the rectory moat. Through the next gate, turn right and then left along the footpath with the woodland on your left, re-entering our land at Brook Wood ④. Crack and grey willow predominate here. Muntjac are spotted here, along with stoat dashing across the path. Birdlife is best in the spring but look out for great spotted



woodpeckers on some of the older oaks in the hedge and the odd reed bunting.

Continue along the main track ⑤ and head west, through the gate. You're about halfway now. A little further and you'll reach a fork in the path ⑥. The northern path leads to the tip of the reserve, and you can explore the lakes.



A glossy ibis was seen here in 2017

You may see a kingfisher dart across the water or herons and little egrets fishing along the margins. Head back the way you came and re-join the path by turning right towards the River Soar (a left turn would take you back to Cossington and Sibleby). At Moor Pool ⑦ there's a bench for you to have a short break, or rest on the fence and scan the tops of the reeds for bearded tits. In snowy weather in 2010, a bittern showed well along this path. Starling murmurations can also be enjoyed at Moor Pool, and we have been extremely lucky to spot a water shrew here.

Pass through the small copse and into The Moor ⑧. You may be lucky to see a short-eared owl here in the winter. They hunt day and night but are not guaranteed: some winters there are lots, and others there are none. Barn owls are resident, too, but you will have to arrive early morning or late evening as they're crepuscular. We've even seen photos taken at Cossington of a barn owl and short-eared owl fighting on the ground! During really cold weather look out for water rail along the river - they are forced out of their reedy habitat to hunt for food.

Now head over the wooden bridge and walk through the alder trees until you get to Lower Moor and Plover Meadow scrapes ⑨. Wintertime brings ducks like wigeon, teal and gadwall, and if you scan the margins you may spot a snipe or two.

You are nearly at the end of your stroll around the reserve. Follow the river to the boat house, bearing left to the main entrance.



Fact file

The reserve is situated to the west of Cossington village, alongside the River Soar. There is also access at several other points, where public footpaths enter the reserve. Dogs are welcome on leads. Cars can be parked off the road outside the main entrance on the Syston Road or in the small public car park adjacent to Cossington Parish Church. Head west out of Cossington on Syston Road towards Rothley, the reserve is on your right, north of the road.

Nearest postcode: LE7 4UZ

Size: 89ha

For further information, please see our Nature Reserves Guide or lrwt.org.uk

Short-eared Owl © Danny Green/2020Vision
Wigeon © David Tipling/2020Vision
Glossy ibis © John Bridges

Slowing the flow

for people and wildlife in the Soar Valley



Ben Devine, Conservation Officer for LRWT and Alex McDonald, Senior Environmental Project Manager for the Environment Agency, look at how working with nature can bring benefits for people.

A new project is underway in the upper Soar Valley to help protect local people from flooding and create valuable new wildlife habitats in the process.

The three-year Soar Natural Flood Management project is part of a national pilot scheme, including 60 other projects across the UK, led by the Environment Agency and including Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. Working together, we're monitoring and researching the effectiveness of Natural Flood Management on our landscapes. We hope that this pioneering research can then be used across the UK to find natural ways to protect people, businesses and landscapes from flooding.

Working with nature

Natural Flood Management is about working with natural processes to reduce flooding. It involves implementing a wide range of measures that help to protect, restore and copy the natural functions of river catchments and floodplains. By thinking naturally, we hope to reduce the amount of water in the flood and delay the arrival of a flood downstream, by holding the water back for as long as possible. Ultimately, this is about time travel. We are improving the natural function of the River Soar, helping the surrounding landscape store more water as it once did historically, before landscape change and use put pressure on and damaged our river catchments.



How do we slow the flow?

- Planting trees
 - Creating 'leaky dams'
- Restoring peatlands
 - Digging ponds
- Removing culverts
 - Restoring meanders



Once the measures are installed, a network of equipment including water level monitors and time-lapse cameras will monitor the area. Natural Flood Management can work wonders on a river catchment. As well as helping with flood prevention, it can lead to habitat creation for wildlife; prevention of soil erosion; and improvements in water quality to name just a few. It can also reduce our reliance on hard-engineering solutions at locations where communities are affected. It's a win-win for wildlife and people.

Narborough Bog

Our involvement is centred on our Narborough Bog nature reserve, with the aim of rewetting large areas of habitat across the site. As a result of historic changes in hydrology and pressures from surrounding development such as roads and railway lines, Narborough Bog has dried-up significantly over the years. We are delighted to be working with the Environment Agency and others to improve the watercourse for the benefit of wetland wildlife and local communities downstream.

Narborough Bog is one of four landholdings taking part in the project within the upper Soar


Valley, and work started this autumn close to the riverbanks. This included felling a small number of trees and securing them across the span of the river and in the floodplain. These will slow and catch water when heavy rain occurs. We are also using fallen trees and strategically-placed brush piles to 'roughen up' the floodplain, intercepting yet more water. The habitats will attract a wider variety of species to existing areas of wet woodland,



including aquatic plants and invertebrates in the first instance, along with bats, birds and amphibians at a later stage.

At the other sites, ponds are being created to store water and tree planting used to slow water as it moves over land. Each site will be monitored with changes in water levels and ecology closely scrutinised to see how effective the measures are. By the time this project is completed in 2021, we'll have a wealth of research that will allow us to make better decisions on our approach to flood management, doing the best thing for people and for wildlife. 🌱



 Visit Narborough Bog and our other wetland sites this winter: lrwt.org.uk/nature-reserves

Exploring Narborough Bog © Ben Devine
Common Frog © Luke Massey/2020Vision
Kingfisher © Dawn Monrose. Narborough Bog © Ben Devine



Legacy of a lifetime

Senior Conservation Officer Neil Pilcher describes the impact that philanthropy has had in saving nature in Leicestershire and Rutland.



Sometimes it takes an act of extreme generosity, selflessness and charity to save a special wild place. Luckily for nature, both locally and beyond, we have been powered by those individuals who have gone the extra mile to save wildlife. From Charles Rothschild who founded The Wildlife Trusts movement, to people like Anders Holch Povlsen who has bought vast tracts (over 220,000 acres!) of land in Scotland for rewilding, individuals can make all the difference.

Of all philanthropic spending in Britain, just three per cent goes towards the environment. Despite this, since 1956, LRWT has been grateful to receive a significant number of gifts and bequests, including 11 gifts of land. These range from 192 hectares at Charnwood Lodge to 0.7 hectares at Miles Piece, totalling nearly 300 hectares - roughly a quarter of the Trust's landholding. Most of these gifts came from individuals who want to ensure that their land will be managed for wildlife forever.

Charnwood Lodge

Charnwood Lodge was gifted by Miss Clarke, passing to our care in 1973 following her death. She wanted to honour her family's passion for wildlife and preserve it for the future. She declared Charnwood Lodge a nature reserve in 1961 in memory of her brother, Shirley William Clarke. This was a remarkable gift, including High Tor Farm, several cottages, Charnwood Lodge House and multiple outbuildings, as well as nearly 500 acres of land, now worth around £4 million. She asked that the estate was preserved for the study of natural history. It was her greatest fear that the estate would 'become another Bradgate Park', so restrictions on public access were key to her bequest.

Cloud Wood

Cloud Wood was left to the Trust in 1993 by the outgoing Director of Ennstone Breedon plc, Mr Shields. He is said to have had stone tracks laid within the woodland so that he could drive his Rolls Royce through it whilst birdwatching! Mr Shields was impressed by the way in which LRWT had worked within Miss Clarke's wishes for Charnwood Lodge, and subsequently Cloud Wood was gifted to us. He too included a restriction on public access.

What makes a good gift of land?

Large areas are usually best for wildlife as they are more robust, whilst small sites tend to be more vulnerable and take disproportionately more resources to manage. However, some small sites are wildlife havens and can link up

to form 'corridors' for wildlife. Any land has potential to be good for wildlife, so don't be put off if your land isn't currently biodiverse. Inspired by the Knepp Estate, LRWT has a vision of creating a vast tract of rewilded land and all we need is the blank canvas; a large area of low-grade agricultural land could be ideal!

Talk to us now

When Miss Clarke was thinking about the future of Charnwood Lodge, she took steps to ensure the reserve would be preserved after her death. Her gift was written into her Will for over 10 years before she died. Other benefactors have also given land to the Trust before their death. This removes the burden of management and ensures that land is preserved. Landowners have also offered their land for sale to us before advertising on the open market, below market price. This is an excellent solution where a landowner cannot afford to make a complete gift. Increasingly, the Trust has found it difficult to compete for land, so these gifts are invaluable.

As the manager of Charnwood Lodge, I often feel I have the ghost of Miss Clarke looking over my shoulder checking that I am keeping to her wishes. I hope that she remains satisfied with what she sees!

Providing the conditions are reasonable and legal, LRWT is happy to accommodate a benefactor's wishes. However, we would recommend the careful consideration of conditions as it might make the management of the land difficult. We are happy to offer advice in all cases and work with you to ensure that your land is managed for wildlife.

 Are you thinking of your legacy? If you'd like to discuss how to preserve your land for wildlife in the future, contact Neil Pilcher on npilcher@lrwt.org.uk or 0116 248 7348

The Trust would like to thank Miss Clarke, Mr Shields, Pleasance Burroughes, Mrs I Cheales (nee Miles), Charles Cliffe Jones, Leicestershire County Council, Severn Trent Water, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and Leicestershire Barn Owl Group for their gifts of land.

Great-spotted Woodpecker © Mark Hamblin/2020Vision.
Charnwood Lodge memorial © Neil Pilcher.
Cloud Wood © Neil Pilcher.





Mud, Glorious Mud!



Birdfair Founder Tim Appleton shares the highlights from the international wildlife event of the year.

According to the Chinese zodiac, 2019 is the Year of the Pig. If you came to Birdfair, you'll agree that we certainly were happy as pigs in mud! And lots of it! We passed through every season in just three days, basking in glorious sunshine, sheltering from driving rain and plodding through puddles, and yet it was one of the best. It seems that the more adverse the conditions, the more the Birdfair family comes together with an amazing, unifying spirit. Slipping and sliding from marquee to marquee, visitors smiled, laughed and even leant a hand.

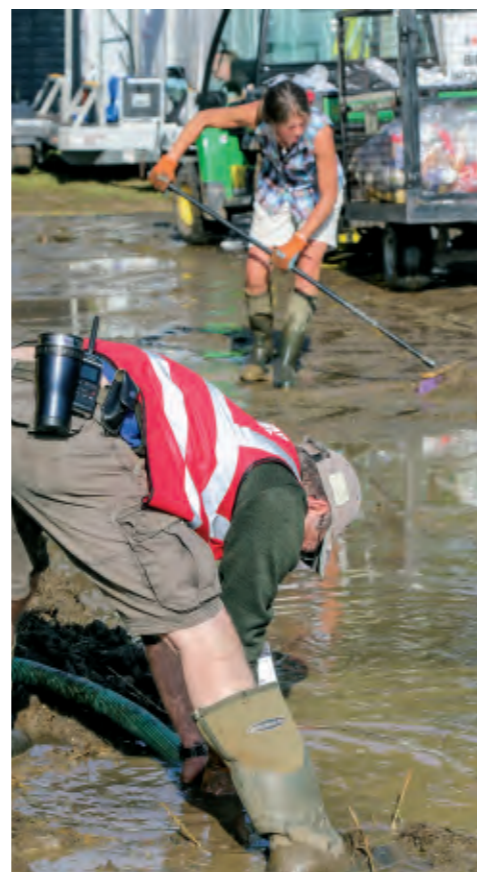
This was our 31st Birdfair: an amazing achievement for the fantastic staff working in the Birdfair office and on the Rutland Water nature reserve. As a relatively small, local wildlife charity, we can be truly proud of the impact Birdfair has had on global conservation, raising directly more than £5 million and a further £35 million through match funding and other sources.

Despite the conditions, 22,747 visitors attended over the weekend: a brilliant year. More people visited for the entire weekend, too! This is boosting the local economy and community by an estimated £800,000.

Visitors come to Birdfair for many reasons: networking, purchasing new products, looking for wildlife holidays, learning about latest conservation issues, and being entertained. The Events Marquee and Lecture Theatres saw a record year, with a footfall of nearly 28,500. As always, we tackled brave, hard-hitting and interesting subjects through our panels and debates, including discussions on climate change, illegal bird persecution, politics and rewilding, whilst star-studded gameshows and talks (and of course the annual Birdfair pantomime!) kept audiences laughing throughout.



The 'welly-man' cleared his stock in record time, our tractors worked overtime pulling cars and vans from muddy car parks, and we didn't receive a single complaint.



Friday's *State of the Earth* Question Time brought a unique gathering of leading figures from the world of broadcasting, writing, campaigning, business and politics. National media eyes also turned towards Birdfair as conservationist Carrie Symonds made her first public appearance and speech since stepping into Number 10 Downing Street as the Prime Minister's partner.

The new food court showcased an incredible range of small local award-winning companies providing high-quality, wholesome food from a range of cultures and cuisines. This proved an instant success with our visitors with long queues, happy customers and something for everyone, including vegan and vegetarian options.

Families and young conservationists all enjoyed a super weekend thanks to our Wild Zone (this year located in the

Anglian Birdwatching Centre), highlighted by the Nature Careers Day. A range of experts focused on several aspects of career opportunities ranging from writing to broadcasting, reserve management to academia, sharing their knowledge with an eager audience of children, young adults and keen parents alike.

The Birdfair team prove that small really can be mighty. This year they traversed new challenges, from complicated travel regulation changes to the last-minute costs of hiring temporary trackway to survive the deluge of rain. Despite all this, we are hopeful that our 2019 Birdlife project, "Conserving Cambodia's Big Five", will still receive substantial funds, boosting their conservation work at the incredibly important Western Siem Pang Reserve. 🐦



Birdfair 2020

21st - 23rd August
Don't forget to put it in your diary!



A shore thing

A shoal of citizen scientists across the UK will be learning more about our shorelines than ever before, following the launch of The Wildlife Trusts' new and improved Shoresearch programme this summer.

This national citizen science survey trains volunteers to monitor the marine life around our coasts, gathering valuable data that will help experts monitor our sea life and better understand the effects of pollution and climate change.

Surveys focus on the intertidal zone (the area of the shore that is covered by water at high tide, but exposed to the air at low tide). They take place on all shores, rocky, sandy and muddy alike, to chart coastal wildlife around the UK.

Anyone can become a budding marine biologist by attending a free Shoresearch event hosted by a coastal Wildlife Trust. Regular volunteers will be trained to identify and record intertidal plants and animals and their habitats, from colourful butterflyfish hiding in rockpools to weird and wonderful worms buried in the sand and mud.

Previous Shoresearch surveys have used different approaches depending on which part of the UK they took place in. Now, for the first time, the same methods will be used across the UK, giving us even better data and

ensuring that species records can be compared between different regions and changes can be monitored.

The data collected by Shoresearch in the past has already been key to securing many of our Marine Conservation Zones, revealing the special places on our coast that are most in need of protection. Following the Government's designation of 41 new Marine Conservation Zones this summer (bringing the total in English waters to 91), the Shoresearch programme will be crucial for monitoring the health of the coastal regions of many of these protected areas.

Shoresearch launched during this year's National Marine Week, the annual celebration of our seas in which thousands of people enjoyed coastal activities, from rockpool rambles to whale watching.

Find out more
Learn more about Shoresearch and discover how you can get involved:
wildlifetrusts.org/shoresearch

Shoresearchers: Ulster wildlife

A YEAR OF SUCCESS FOR OUR SEAS

■ **More protection - this May the Government announced the designation of 41 new Marine Conservation Zones, adding to the 50 already designated. These will form a vital series of underwater habitats which, with the right management, will allow nature to recover.**

■ **Better information - The Wildlife Trusts' new Shoresearch programme launched in July, giving citizen scientists the chance to survey our shores, gathering vital data on the health of our coastal wildlife.**

■ **Fantastic support - thousands of people across the UK, Alderney and the Isle of Man joined us in celebrating our seas during National Marine Week.**

UK UPDATE

End of an era

Stephanie Hilborne OBE has stepped down as Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts. Steph has led The Wildlife Trust movement, championing its beliefs and vision, for the last 15 years.

Under Steph's leadership, The Wildlife Trusts have been at the forefront of marine conservation, successfully campaigning for the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, led on landscape-scale conservation and published ground-breaking research on the benefits of nature for health and wellbeing.

Speaking about her departure, Steph said, "I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to be so central to this amazing movement of dedicated people who care so passionately about wildlife and future generations. I wish all my friends in the movement well as they go from strength to strength."

We wish Steph all the best in her new role as CEO of Women in Sport.

wildlifetrusts.org/ceo-steps-down



25 years of support

This November, The National Lottery celebrates its 25th birthday and we look back on a quarter of a century of support for wildlife and wild places across the UK.

Since the first draw in 1994, The National Lottery has raised over £40 billion for good causes - including more than 800 Wildlife Trust projects.

This vital funding has enabled Wildlife Trusts to save thousands of hectares of land,

protect rare and vulnerable wildlife and bring people of all generations closer to nature, from helping barn owls in Northern Ireland to restoring wild landscapes in Scotland.

Learn more about the work that The National Lottery has supported at wildlifetrusts.org/25-year-lottery



Saving sand dunes

A pioneering project is stepping in to save Europe's most threatened habitat, sand dunes. Home to rare plants and animals, including fen orchids and sand lizards, the last century has seen them decline dramatically. The ambitious Dynamic Dunescape project aims to reverse these declines, working with local people to bring life back to our dunes. This partnership project was made possible by £4m funding from The National Lottery. wildlifetrusts.org/saving-sand-dunes



Sand lizard: Vaughn Matthews, Sundew: Mark Hamblin/2020Vision, barn owl: Andy Rouse/2020Vision

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are working for you across the UK



1 Moor wildlife

600 acres of wildlife-rich moorland have been saved from potential development by Northumberland Wildlife Trust, thanks to incredible support for their fundraising appeal. Benshaw Moor is home to round-leaved sundews and sphagnum mosses, as well as nesting curlews, otters and rare butterflies. The site will now be protected as a nature reserve.

nwt.org.uk/news/benshaw



2 Tern tracking

For the first time ever, chicks from Wales' only Sandwich tern colony have been given special "flags" to help birdwatchers track their movements. Each flag, fixed to a ring on the bird's leg, has a unique code that can be read through a spotting scope, helping us learn more about these seabirds.

northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/ringing-changes

3 Going batty

The largest ever survey of Alderney's bat population has revealed the island's first live brown long-eared bat. For Alderney Wildlife Trust's 'Bat Week', visiting experts trained residents in survey techniques while conducting an island-wide study. They also found five pipistrelle roosts, including a maternity roost, and a natterer's bat.

alderneywildlife.org/bat-week-2019

6 places to see Winter wildfowl



As the temperature drops, our wetlands fill with wildfowl escaping the harsher winters of their breeding grounds. It's a sensational spectacle as swans, geese and ducks descend on our lakes and reservoirs in loud, colourful groups. The air fills with the joyous whistling of wigeons and teals, while groups of elegant grey gadwalls rub shoulders with green-headed mallards, beautiful pintails and bizarre-billed shovelers. Diving ducks like pochards and tufted ducks are joined by goldeneyes – the males a glorious glowing white as they bob to the surface between feeding dives.



See the spectacle
for yourself

1 East Chevington, Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Just a short walk from the beach, the wintering ducks on these two lakes are sometimes joined by seagoing species like the lovely long-tailed duck.

Where: Near Red Row, NE61 5BX

2 Foulney Island, Cumbria Wildlife Trust

Spot wintering brent geese, or look for common scoters and long-tailed ducks on the sea amongst the large flocks of eiders.

Where: Near Barrow in Furness, LA13 0QL

3 Teifi Marshes

The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales

One of Wales' best wetlands, attracting large numbers of wintering ducks including teals, wigeons and mallards.

Where: Cardigan, SA43 2TB

4 Rutland Water

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

Around 30,000 wildfowl can spend the winter at Rutland Water, often including several smews – one of our rarest and most beautiful winter ducks.

Where: Oakham, LE15 8BT

5 Catcott, Somerset Wildlife Trust

In winter the flooded fields host wigeons, teals and pintails – a definite contender for the UK's most elegant duck.

Where: Burtle, TA7 8NQ

6 Blue House Farm, Essex Wildlife Trust

Listen to the bubbling calls of thousands of brent geese, which travel from Siberia to feed in the sheltered Crouch Estuary.

Where: North Fambridge, CM3 6GU

Did you see one?

We'd love to know how your wildfowl search went. Please tweet us your best photos of ducks, geese and swans from your day out @wildlifetrusts

UK NEWS

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

How you can help wildlife this winter

From log and leaf piles to open compost heaps and towers of terracotta pots by the side of the shed, Kate Bradbury reveals how we can provide safe habitats for overwintering wildlife in our gardens.

Bird box
Birds may use these to roost communally on very cold nights. Fill them with dry leaves or similar material to make them warmer.

With the notable exception of birds, most garden wildlife lies dormant over winter, with only a few species, such as hedgehogs, truly hibernating. The rest spend winter in various states of 'torpor' – not fully shutting down their bodies as true hibernating animals do. That's why, on sunny days, you may spot frogs swimming at the bottom of your pond, or bats flying on mild evenings. Even true hibernating animals have a break from all that sleeping – hedgehogs wake up and move nest sites at least once during the cold months.

might shelter anything from caterpillars, beetles, centipedes and woodlice to larger species, such as amphibians and mammals. Others hide deep down in the thatch of long or tufty grass, bury themselves in the soil, or shuffle into the still-warm grass clippings and food waste in the compost heap.

Spare a thought for birds, too, which have to battle it out in winter, instead of hibernating. Growing berrying plants, feeding them and creating cosy roosts can help them in winter, too.

Gardens of all sizes are an essential part of a Nature Recovery Network. For more tips visit wildlifetrusts.org/gardening

Kate Bradbury is passionate about wildlife-friendly gardening and the author of *Wildlife Gardening for Everyone and Everything* in association with The Wildlife Trusts.

Illustration: Hannah Bailey, Photo: Sarah Cuttle

Long and tufty grass
Caterpillars and other insects hunker down in the thatch. Some caterpillars may emerge on mild days to eat the grass, so try to leave it uncut until mid-spring.

Shed
Adult butterflies may sneak into your shed or outhouse to overwinter on the walls, where they resemble leaves. Make sure there's a gap so they can leave in spring.

Log pile
Insects hide beneath the logs, while amphibians and small mammals, such as these wood mice, shelter in gaps. Fill them with autumn leaves to make them more snug.

Compost heap
A large, open heap will attract insects including bumblebees and amphibians, such as this smooth newt. It may even lure mammals such as hedgehogs. Try to leave it undisturbed until April.



Bird feeders
Birds need as many calories as they can find during the short winter days to give them the energy they need to survive each night. Provide energy-rich suet products, peanuts and sunflower hearts. You can even buy window-mounted feeders if you don't have a garden.

Pond
Frogs (particularly males) overwinter at the bottom of ponds so they can be the first to mate in spring. Float a ball on the surface to stop it freezing over.

Garden borders
Lots of insects like to shelter among fallen plant stems, particularly hollow stems. Try not to cut back or tidy the border until spring – leave it to rot down naturally, instead.

Seedheads
Seedheads provide shelter for ladybirds and other insects in winter, and offer a natural source of food for birds, so leave them standing until spring.

Soil
A wide range of species overwinter in the soil, from slow worms to moth pupae and bumblebees. Try to resist digging the soil until mid-spring when they'll be awake.



GO WILD in the city

It's not only pigeons and people that live in concrete jungles. Nature writer Amy-Jane Beer reveals the exciting variety of wildlife that not only survives but thrives in the built-up habitats of our cities.



Red and fallow deer live in managed herds in some urban parks, but wild deer also roam our suburbs. We need green spaces in our towns and cities to create a Nature Recovery Network that helps wildlife spread and thrive and connects people with nature.

Red deer: Terry Whittaker/2020Vision, kingfisher: Laurent Geslin/Naturepl.com

Worldwide, about 55% of people live in cities or towns, and that figure is set to rise to 66% by 2050. The UK is ahead of the curve: as far back as 1950, urbanites accounted for 79% of the populace, and by 2030 it'll be 92%.

The urban landscape offers humans every convenience – providing us with roosts and dens (though you might call it housing), optimal foraging opportunities (retail, if you must), efficient means of getting about, of interacting socially, of rearing families. They are an ideal human habitat in many ways, except perhaps for the loss of close contact with nature. This contact, we are beginning to recognise, is vital.

Happily, it is surprisingly easy to encourage wildlife into urban areas. In fact some species have been exploiting the opportunities of manmade environments for generations, and others are on the rise. Partly this is a result of increasing pressure on habitats in the wider countryside, but it's also because some towns and cities are making space for nature.

Green oases

Many British townscapes have a surprising amount of green space. Gardens, parks, recreation areas, business parks, university campuses and other institutional grounds can all offer excellent habitat for everything from butterflies to bats, woodlice to wood mice, sparrows to swifts. Wild plants thrive too, invited or otherwise – there is no reason for anyone to grow up unfamiliar with daisies, dandelions, nettles, docks, and ivy or with trees such as planes, willows, holly and limes. These all bring their own retinues of invertebrates and birds, so that gardens, parks and even scrub-covered vacant lots and back alleys often literally thrum with life.

You'd be mistaken for thinking urban wildlife was mostly small. Our largest terrestrial mammal, the red deer, lives wild a stone's throw from central London. A November morning in Richmond Park can feel primordial, with rutting stags bellowing and clashing antlers, while locals jog and commuters hurry past wearing headphones.

The first and most conspicuous species to reclaim urbanised habitats are often commensals – species that thrive best alongside humans, including rats, house mice, house sparrows and feral pigeons. These may not be universally popular creatures, but a little bit of wildlife easily begets more. Just as 'weeds' bring

Healthy populations of kingfishers in urban areas such as central London, Manchester, Aylesbury, Coventry, Leeds and Preston show the important role waterways have in greening our towns and cities.

invertebrates, which in turn feed bats and birds, mice are food for foxes and owls. Where there is ivy, there is food for bees and cover for birds, even in winter. Where there are sparrows there may be sparrowhawks. Where there are pigeons, peregrines can thrive – the pair that live in my home city of York have bred among the ornate stone grotesques and finials of the Minster, and their lethal raids provide an appropriately gothic spectacle over the often-unsuspecting heads of shoppers and tourists.

Where there are sparrows, there may be sparrowhawks. Where there are pigeons, peregrines can thrive

Another cliff-nesting bird that has taken to manmade structures is the kittiwake – a dainty gull with an eponymous 'kitti-waaaayk' call. The colony that has made its home fully eight kilometres inland on Newcastle quayside has become a local cause célèbre, despite the liberal splatter of guano that accumulates on local landmarks such as the Tyne Bridge and Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art.

Unlike larger gulls, kittiwakes are not scavengers. No chips, kebabs or cigarette butts for them. The Newcastle birds still hunt far out to sea, spending 10 hours or more away from their young and returning to their artificial cliff ledges with crops full of sandeels. A webcam installed by Durham Wildlife Trust attracts thousands of viewers, who follow the annual drama of nesting, rearing and fledging.

Water brings life

Water is a magnet and a corridor for a huge range of urban wildlife. Canals and ornamental ponds invite the solemn, stately presence of grey herons, which may even nest in plain sight if trees of adequate stature are available. None of our cities yet rival Amsterdam, which is home to more than 800 herons, but there is potential.

The electric blue and orange flicker of kingfishers may seem like the stuff of leafy idylls, but improvements in water quality and fish populations mean these glittering birds can now be seen flickering along waterways in cities such as London and Bristol. A similarly heartening story is that of the otter. In the 1970s and 1980s, these sinuous aquatic carnivores →



My favourite urban spectacle

Our experts from around the Wildlife Trusts share their wildlife highlights



Stag beetle

"Stag beetles are such an exciting part of summer.

Hearing their whirring, clumsy flight over the garden or balcony on a warm evening is so atmospheric. I always rush out to see their amazing 'antlers'. I'm lucky to live in south London, which is a hotspot for these otherwise declining giants, so I try to create as much habitat as possible for them."

Rachel Dowse, London Wildlife Trust



Cheerful ragwort flowers attract butterflies and other insects



Ragwort

"Ragwort is known by many names, including stinking willie, benweed and St Jameswort. It's commonly viewed as a weed and a pest, but I love it for the important role it plays in our ecosystem, providing a home and food to at least 77 insect species, 30 of which eat only ragwort and nothing else!"

Qasim McShane, The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country



Brown hare

"There's wildlife we're used to seeing in urban settings, such as foxes and squirrels – and then there are some surprises.

One morning, I saw what I first thought was a rabbit near my tram stop in Nottingham. A closer look revealed it to be a brown hare – a creature associated with wide open countryside – wandering unphased up the street!"

Hattie Lavender, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

Small skipper on ragwort: Ross Hoddinott/2020Vision, grey heron: Terry Whittaker/2020Vision, lime hawk-moth: Roger Hatcliffe, author: Lyndon Smith



As cities have cleaned up their waterways, grey herons have returned. Today, the birds loiter in many London parks, watching passers-by for handouts, and form bustling breeding colonies in park trees.

were creatures of near mythic scarcity. Now they can be seen in or close to the centres of Edinburgh, Leeds, Exeter and Winchester.

On a smaller scale, the popularity of lime trees with the urban planners of yesteryear means city streets and parks are among the best places to spot one of our most spectacular insects. The adult lime hawk-moth wears a version of the 1960s carpet I remember from my grandma's house, while the pencil thick caterpillars are resplendent in lime (naturally) green, with smart diagonal stripes and a lurid blue 'horn' at the posterior.

Home for hedgehogs

Perhaps the best loved of all urban wildlife is a species that visits our homes without causing any inconvenience and often without apparent fear. Hedgehogs have undergone a catastrophic decline over recent decades, but some urban

populations are bucking the trend, thanks largely to sympathetic homeowners. Gardens make superb hedgehog habitat provided they are accessible (a 13cm square hole in a fence or wall is sufficient), and contain sufficient cover and invertebrate food. Small slugs, beetles and grubs make up the bulk of the diet, and this further endears the 'hedgepig' to gardeners.

Foxes are particularly well suited to city living. Adaptable and opportunistic, they have taken to denning under sheds and decking; sunning themselves on shed and garage roofs; making use of roads and rail verges, canal paths, cycleways and footpaths to cover distances more efficiently; and foraging among bins and outside takeaways.

Town foxes are often less nocturnal than rural ones, and less wary of people, which gives them the impression of being more abundant, though in truth they only account for about 13% of the total fox population. Nor are they any bigger, or any more or less healthy – rural foxes are just as likely to be afflicted by mange, but less likely to be photographed. Some foxes appear to transition between urban and rural habitats, taking advantage of each in different ways.



The adult lime hawk-moth wears a version of the 1960s carpet I remember from my grandma's house

10 great cities for urban wildlife



1 Inverness On the edge of the Moray Firth, 'The City in the Highlands' is great for wildlife. If you're lucky you could even spot a bottlenose dolphin.

2 Glasgow The city's rivers hold wild and watery wonders, from dippers and water voles to otters!

3 Belfast In the heart of the city, Bog Meadows reserve attracts abundant birds, from warblers in spring to winter thrushes in autumn.

4 Newcastle A colony of kittiwakes has swapped coastal cliffs for buildings and bridge ledges.

5 Leicester From peregrines nesting on Leicester Cathedral to urban foxes to little pockets of wild scattered around the city.

6 Sheffield A green corridor of parks and reserves with woodlands, wetlands and hedgerows carries wildlife through the city.

7 Birmingham This city boasts more miles of canal than Venice, which draw dragonflies and damselflies right into the centre.

8 Cardiff This metropolis is home to over half of the UK's bat species, including the rare lesser horseshoe.

9 Bristol One of the UK's best cities for urban wildlife, the nearby Avon Gorge is home to peregrine falcons and ravens.

10 London England's capital is full of wildlife. Stag beetles roam the parks and gardens, deer patrol parklands and herons stalk the Serpentine.

In need of a helping hand

It's not all good news. Some formerly abundant urban birds are in trouble. The house sparrow, once considered too common to even be counted on bird surveys, has declined massively as an urban bird, nowhere more so than London, where a 98% crash in population in the 1990s led to questions being asked in parliament. You'll still be lucky to see one in the capital, but at least the decline has gone some way to rehabilitate the image of a species regarded as too numerous in years gone by.

Starlings have declined markedly too, but are still common enough that their cheery, irrepressible whistles and cover versions of sirens, car alarms and text alerts can still be heard on many city streets in spring, while winter flocks boosted by birds from the continent put on displays of such grandeur they literally stop traffic.

Perhaps the best known urban murmuration location in the UK is Brighton, where a mixed flock of around 40,000 gathers to roost on the scaffold of the derelict West Pier, often obliging photographers with a performance against the setting sun.

Waxwings are another winter spectacle sure to draw the wildlife paparazzi. These buff, immaculately coiffed rockstar birds arrive from Scandinavia in numbers that vary from year to year, depending on the severity of winter and the availability of food, specifically berries. It's worth planting a rowan, cotoneaster or a hawthorn in an urban garden, just for the chance of a waxwing irruption alighting on your patch. They don't usually stick around longer than it takes to strip the fruit and toss them down like peanuts, although fermented fruit sometimes reduces whole flocks to drunken lethargy. Either way, a sighting will give you wildlife bragging rights for at least a year.



Amy-Jane Beer

is a North Yorkshire-based biologist and author specialising in natural history and conservation. She contributes to *The Guardian* and *BBC Wildlife* magazine.



Events and Activities

January 2020 – May 2020

We offer an amazing, interesting and varied programme of events for all ages to get involved with, organised by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and our Local Groups. Both members and non-members are welcome at our guided walks, Local Group events and meetings. Please note that this programme is liable to change or cancellation, for which the Trust can accept no liability.

Charnwood Local Group

Indoor meetings are held at Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall. Admission £2.50 for members, £3 non-members, refreshments included. Contact Kate Moore on 01509 891 005, email kate.moore123@yahoo.co.uk, or John Spencer on 0116 236 4279.

Great Bowden Local Group

Indoor meetings are held at the Village Hall, The Green, Great Bowden. Admission £2.50 for members, £3.50 non-members, refreshments included. Contact Bruce White on 01858 467 976.

Humberstone Local Group

Indoor meetings are held at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Armadale Drive, Leicester. Admission £2, refreshments included. Contact Alison Gardner on 0116 241 3598.

Melton Mowbray Local Group

Indoor meetings are held at United Reform Church, Chapel Street, Melton Mowbray. Contact Peter Dawson on 01664 852 119 or email peter.dawson69@ntlworld.com

North West Local Group

Indoor meetings are held at the Ashby Methodist Chapel, Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Admission £3. Contact David Maltby on 01530 222 934 or Margaret Mabey on 01530 412 410.

Oadby & Wigston Local Group

Indoor meetings are held at Trinity Methodist Church, Oadby. Admission £3, refreshments included. Contact Stuart Mucklejohn on 0116 281 0835 or email owgroup.lrwat@gmail.com

Rutland Local Group

Indoor meetings are held at the Trust's Volunteer Training Centre, off Oakham Road, Hambleton, LE15 8AD. Admission £2. Contact Becky Ward on 01572 345 069.

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

is affiliated to the Trust. Indoor meetings are held at the Claremont Street Methodist Church, Leicester, LE4 7QH. Admission £2, refreshments included. Contact Dr David Duckett on 0116 259 7231.

Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group

is affiliated to the Trust and the Bat Conservation Trust. Several of the Trust's nature reserves have bat box schemes. Meetings are open to non members, free admission, no need to book.

JANUARY

North West Local Group

Wednesday 1st January, 1.00pm

New Years Day walk

Enjoy a refreshing walk to blow away the cobwebs and discover water birds at Barrow upon Trent. Meet at St Wilfred's Church, Church Lane, DE73 7HB

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th January – 9.45am – 4.00pm

Hedgelaying Weekend for Beginners

On this 2-day course you will have a brief introduction to this ancient art, learn what it involves, when to hedge-lay and how. You will lay your own section of hedge. The course is run by experienced hedge layer John Shone. Booking essential at rutlandwater.org.uk.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve:

Volunteer Training Centre

Wednesday 8th January, 11.00am – 12.00pm

Wildlife Book Club

If you love reading and wildlife, the Trust's Wildlife Book Club is for you! Get in touch with our Volunteer and Events Coordinator at volunteering@rutlandwater.org.uk or call 01572 270 049 Free to join

Charnwood Local Group

Wednesday 8th January, 7.30pm

Tales from the Bush

Members of the Charnwood Group talk about some of their recent wildlife encounters in Southern Africa, Patagonia and India.

Wild Walk

Thursday 9th January, 10.00am – 12.30pm

Winter Wildfowl Walk at Cossington Meadows, with Chris Hill

Begin the year with a walk around our largest nature reserve in the Soar valley with Conservation Officer, Chris Hill. Discover what changes have occurred on the reserve over the last decade, whilst watching the winter wildfowl. Meet at the Syston Road entrance. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Saturday 11th January – 9.00am – 4.00pm

Winter Wildfowl Day with Terry Mitcham

This is an excellent opportunity to see the wide variety of wildfowl that visit Rutland Water in the winter. Booking essential at rutlandwater.co.uk. £15pp (£10 Annual Permit Holder), includes parking and access for the day.

Charnwood Local Group

Sunday 12th January

A winter wildlife walk

Join us on a winter walk at a local reserve to see what wildlife we can find in winter. Venue and time to be decided. Weather dependent. More details will be advertised at our January meeting.

Melton Local Group

Monday 13th January, 7.30pm

Wildlife Photography with Jack Perks

A photographic presentation by one of the UK's leading underwater photographers.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Tuesday 14th January – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

Join local nature expert Jeff Davies for a leisurely walk on a nature reserve at Egleton to discover the many species of birds and other wildlife. All abilities welcome. Booking essential at rutlandwater.co.uk. £10pp (£5 Annual Permit Holder), includes parking and access for the day.

Great Bowden Local Group

Wednesday 15th January, 7.30pm

The Amazing Life of Birds

A return visit from Tony Clarke where he will amaze us with little known facts about the lives of birds.

North West Local Group

Friday 17th January, 7.30pm

The Dimmingsdale Area Quarries and Coalmines

Samuel Stuart traces the development of this former industrial area and Baz Forgham will show us the current legacy in one of the Trust's most interesting reserves.

Rutland Local Group

Monday 20th January, 7.30pm

Leicester Peregrine Project

Jim Graham of the Leicestershire Peregrine Project will talk about this fantastic project.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Friday 24th January – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walks

This is an excellent opportunity to see the wide variety of wildfowl that visit Rutland Water in the winter. Booking essential at rutlandwater.co.uk. £10pp (£5 Annual Permit Holder), includes parking and access for the day.



Humberstone Local Group

Wednesday 29th January, 2.30pm

Group Annual General Meeting and light-hearted quiz

Oadby & Wigston Local Group

Friday 31st January, 7.30pm

Badgers

A talk by Pam Mynott about our biggest land predator.

FEBRUARY

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd February – 9.45am – 4.00pm

Hedgelaying Weekend for Beginners

See January for details. Booking essential at rutlandwater.org.uk.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Tuesday 4th February – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

See January for details.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Wednesday 5th February, 11.00am – 12.00pm

Wildlife Book Club

See January for details.

Melton Local Group

Monday 10th February, 7.30pm

Gianpiero Ferrari on WWW Falkland

Charnwood Local Group

Wednesday 12th February, 7.30pm

Trees as habitat and living things

A talk by Helen Exley, arborist with the University of Loughborough, who will show us how people can be good to trees and their wildlife.

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Thursday 13th February, 7.30pm

Beavers – truly amazing animals!

Pam Mynott, Secretary of the Badger Group, gives an illustrated talk on beavers and the difficulties they face.

Rutland Local Group

Monday 17th February, 7.30pm

River Management for Wildlife

Hugh Bunker from the Environment Agency will talk about river management for biodiversity.

Great Bowden Local Group

Wednesday 19th February, 7.30pm

Wildlife on Walls

Brian Eversham, CEO of BCN Wildlife Trust will reveal what fascinating wildlife can be found in walls.

North West Local Group

Friday 21st February, 7.30pm

I love bees

Kathy Wapples returns to bring us up-to-date with her considerable interest in bees, their life story and how she copes with all the problems they bring.

Humberstone Local Group

Wednesday 26th February, 2.30pm

The Leicestershire Wildlife Hospital

A volunteer from the Hospital will tell us about the work they do for sick and injured birds and animals.



Wild Walk

Thursday 27th February, 10:00am – 12:30pm

Industrial Heritage & Snowdrops at Dimmingsdale, with Nathalie Cossa

Join Conservation Officer Nathalie Cossa to learn about the industrial history of the reserve and see the snowdrop display. Meet at the Severn Trent Water car park followed by a walk around this beautiful reserve looking for snowdrops. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968

Oadby & Wigston Local Group

Friday 28th February, 7.30pm

Coastal Wildlife with David Goldsmith

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Friday 28th February – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walks

See January for details.

MARCH

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Tuesday 3rd March – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

See January for details.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Wednesday 4th March, 11.00am – 12.00pm

Wildlife Book Club

See January for details.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th March – 9.45am – 4.00pm

Hedgelaying Weekend for Beginners

See January for details, booking essential at rutlandwater.org.uk

Melton Local Group

Monday 9th March, 7.30pm

Richard Adams

Photographic wildlife presentation.

Charnwood Local Group

Wednesday 11th March, 7.30pm

AGM followed by Wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland in 2040?

A talk by John Clarkson, the new Head of Conservation at Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, on the possible composition of Leicestershire and Rutland's wildlife by the year 2040.

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Thursday 12th March, 7.30pm

Water Voles of Rutland Water

Linda Biddle, Mammal Recorder for Rutland, will give an illustrated talk detailing what has happened to the population of water voles since their reintroduction at Rutland Water Nature Reserve in 2011.

Wild Walk

Saturday 14th March, 10:00am – 12:30pm

Mosses and Liverworts of Charnwood Lodge, with Uta Hamzaoui

Discover the unexpected diversity and beauty of mosses & liverworts with Conservation Officer Uta Hamzaoui. Learn how to identify Atlantic Pawwort, Ciliated Fringewort, Wood Bristle-moss and more in their special Charnwood Forest habitats. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968

Rutland Local Group

Monday 16th March, 7.30pm

AGM followed by a talk about Beetle Recording in Leicestershire and Rutland

Graham Finch, of the Leicestershire Entomology Society, will talk about beetles and beetle recording in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Great Bowden Local Group

Wednesday 18th March, 7.30pm

Gardening for Wildlife

From 'over the border' again, Stephen Ashpole, chairman of Desborough Local Group will tell us what to do to make our gardens a magnet for a wide range of wildlife.

**North West Local Group**

Friday 20th March, 7.30pm

Pushing up the daisies – flora and fauna of churchyards

Every parish has an acre of land where both people and wildlife can find sanctuary. Steve Woodward, keen naturalist and photographer, has visited all of the churchyards in Leicestershire and Rutland to find out which plants and animals live in them.

Humberstone Local Group

Wednesday 25th March, 2.30pm

Mongolia

A talk by Andy Smith based on the 16-day expedition he went on in June 2019. It covers the birdlife and mammals but also the spectacular landscape of this wonderful country.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Friday 27th March – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walks

See January for details.

Oadby & Wigston Local Group

Friday 27th March, 7.30pm

Photographing Wildlife Abroad

Malcolm Hupman will talk about where he photographs wildlife abroad.

North West Local Group

Friday 27th March, 7.30pm

Group meal at The Beeches, Burton Road Ashby

Enjoy a meal with your wildlife friends and hear the latest news.

APRIL

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Wednesday 1st April, 11.00am – 12.00pm

Wildlife Book Club

See January for details.

Melton Local Group

Monday 6th April, 7.30pm

The Woodland Trust

With Ian Ritson.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Tuesday 7th April – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

See January for details.

Charnwood Local Group

Wednesday 8th April, 7.30pm

A Wildlife Quiz for Everyone

The ever-popular wildlife quiz is back and this year it features new quizmasters. This will be an entertaining evening with questions for everyone whether you are a wildlife expert or just love natural history. Come along and enjoy a fun social evening. Either organise your team beforehand or join others in a team on the night. Bring your own drinks and nibbles to help the evening along.

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Thursday 9th April, 7.30pm

Badger Crime Awareness

Craig Fellowes, retired Police Wildlife Crime Officer and current Wildlife Crime Officer for the Badger Trust, will talk about how to identify and deal with crimes against badgers and their setts.

North West Local Group

Friday 17th April, 7.30pm

Leicester Peregrine Project

Jim Graham of the Leicestershire Peregrine Project will talk about this fantastic project.

Wild Walk

Friday 24th April, 9.00am – 11.00am

Birdsong for Beginners at Narborough Bog, with Andy Neilson

Join Reserves Officer Andy Neilson to learn the basics about identifying birds by song in Narborough Bog, particularly focusing on migrant warblers. Meet at the reserve entrance next to the allotments. All levels of experience are welcome. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968

**Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre**

Friday 24th April – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walks

See January for details.

Humberstone Local Group

Wednesday 29th April, 2.30pm

The Amazing Life of Birds

Tony Clarke will amaze us with little known facts about the lives of birds, using his best action pictures. A bird behaviour spectacular!

Wild Walk

Thursday 30th April, 8.15pm – 10.00pm

Bat Walk at Cossington Meadows, with Ben Devine

Join Bat enthusiast and Trust Conservation Officer Ben Devine at Cossington Meadows and discover which bat species can be found in spring. Please come suitably prepared for a walk in the British countryside and note that due to the nature of the activities dogs are not permitted. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968



MAY

Wild Walk

Thursday 5th May, 8.00pm – 10.00pm

Barn Owl Walk at Sunset at Cossington Meadows, with Chris Hill

Join Conservation Officer Chris Hill at Cossington Meadows to discover the Barn Owls flight in the evening with option to finish for drinks at the Royal Oak pub. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968

**Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre**

Wednesday 6th May, 11.00am – 12.00pm

Wildlife Book Club

See January for details.

Charnwood Local Group

Wednesday 13th May, 7.30pm

Farming for Wildlife – a 20-year perspective

A talk by Julia Hawley from Hall Farm at Brentingby near Melton Mowbray. Under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme the family have undertaken a programme of work to improve the conservation value of the farm.

Wild Walk

Thursday 14th May

Spring Walk at Loughborough Big Meadow, with Chris Hill

Join Conservation Officer Chris Hill at Loughborough Big Meadow to discover and identify the wild flowers and species. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968

**Rutland Local Group**

Wednesday 20th May, 8.00pm

Nightingale Walk at Rutland Water

Andy Neilson will lead a Nightingale walk at Rutland Water, starting from the Volunteer Training Centre. There will be a charge of £5 for those that don't have annual permits for the reserve, and the event is for members only.

Humberstone Local Group

Wednesday 27th May, 2.30pm

The Galapagos Islands

A trip with Val Williams around these fascinating islands with their iguanas and giant tortoises.

Wild Walk

Wednesday 29th May, 9.00am – 11.30am

Birdwatching for Beginners at Ulverscroft Nature Reserve

Join Reserves Officer Andy Neilson for a walk around Ulverscroft, looking at the resident bird species and learning the basics of identification. Meet at the reserve entrance at Fox Covert, all levels of experience are welcome. Booking is essential, places are limited, £5 per person. Please book online at lrwt.org.uk/events or contact 0116 262 9968



Wildlife Watch

Please see Wild Times newsletter in December and March for more details. Booking is essential! Please book online from one month before.

ATTENBOROUGH ARBORETUM WILDLIFE WATCH GROUP

This group meet at Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton, Leicester 10.30am - 12.30pm Unless otherwise stated.

Saturday 11th January

Looking after your garden birds

Building a wooden nest box and make a garden feeder

Saturday 8th February

Who's awake this winter?

Discover what weasels, stoats and pine martens get up to when others are asleep

Saturday 7th March

Campfire Cooking

Learn to start a fire, keep it going and cook some tasty treats

Saturday 4th April

How do birds and animals do it?

Build a bird's nest and a shelter to keep yourself warm and dry

Saturday 9th May

A Taste of the Wild

Find out about plants, flowers and foraging, and find some of nature's tasty treats

RUTLAND WATER WILDLIFE WATCH GROUP

This group meet at the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Egleton, Rutland 10.00am - 12.00pm Unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 12th January

Coppicing

Come and have a go at this traditional woodland management technique.

Sunday 9th February

Slime Time!

Discover how slimy slugs & snails help in the garden then have a go at making your own slime!

Sunday 8th March

Lord of the Stings!

Nettles, wasps, jellyfish and ants; why and how do they sting?

Sunday 5th April

Pond Dipping

Grab a net and investigate the underwater world of a pond.

Sunday 3rd May NB venue change

Osprey Watch

A special session with Our Osprey Education Team. Learn all about ospreys at the fantastic new classroom hide at Lyndon Visitor Centre and spend time at the Osprey nest in the Bay. There is a £2 charge per child.

WILDLIFE WATCH FAMILY EVENTS

These are special Wildlife Watch Family Member only events. Come and explore our wonderful nature reserves and other wild places in the two counties with our knowledgeable staff or local wildlife experts. See Wild Times Winter or Spring for Booking Passwords.

Tuesday 18th February 10.00am – 12.00pm

Snowdrop Walk

Dimmingsdale Nature Reserve, nr Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Sunday 15th March 10.00am – 12.00pm

Woodcraft

Launde Park Wood, nr Loddington

Saturday 18th April 9.00am – 11.00am

Bird Song Walk

Cossington Meadows, nr Rothley

WILD PLAY

Please see Wild Times newsletter in March for more details
Wild Play sessions will run in the Easter Holidays and May half-term

A wild thank you from LRWT

Thanks to players of **People's Postcode Lottery**, we can deliver an outstanding range of activities for children and young people in the city. Wild Forest School provides fun, engaging opportunities for children in Leicester - some of whom have never had the chance to explore the outdoors - to experience the natural world and discover nature through a range of wild activities.

Since 2015, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust has worked with nearly 1,500 children in Leicester thanks to Wild Forest School. With the help of players of People's Postcode Lottery, we have been able to provide children from ages 2 to 16 with the opportunity to learn about and experience nature in ways that simply weren't possible before.

We have worked with 39 groups of primary school children. Teachers say that Forest School helps with regulating emotions, communication, listening and physical skills; boosting confidence, becoming more independent and building friendships.

lrwt.org.uk/learn-discover



Help us **grow** with Corporate Membership

Make your business stand out from the crowd by pledging your support to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. It's good for wildlife and good for business!

We appreciate the support of businesses of all sizes and sectors, who all recognise the importance of protecting our two county's natural environment. Let's work together in partnership to protect our wildlife.

To find out more about our Corporate Membership options please contact Harriet Hickin:

E: hhickin@lrwt.org.uk

T: 0116 248 7358

W: lrwt.org.uk