

Wild

Leicestershire
and Rutland

Membership magazine

Autumn 2021

CALL TO ACTION

Our top ten ways to become
a wildlife champion in
Leicestershire and Rutland



Leicestershire
& Rutland
Wildlife Trust



FARMING FOR NATURE

How wildlife-friendly farming
is helping endangered species
recover

BRILLIANT BATS

Discover the secret world of the
stars of Halloween



Welcome



The pandemic may have slowed things down, but the Trust still has ambitions to realise if we are to see nature's recovery by 2030. Halting the decline isn't enough: we must do more. To make sure we are prioritising the right actions and resources, this year we will agree a bold new strategy.

To support these ambitions, the Trust will need to build its resources whilst examining our own impacts, aiming to become carbon neutral. We'll need to increase opportunities for involvement through volunteering and learning, but also through a culture of partnership and collaborative working. It will see us become leaders that enthuse businesses, local levels of government and the public to support nature's recovery.

Two key areas emerge: dedicated space and empowering more people into action for nature. Our goal of one in four people taking regular action for wildlife by 2030 aims to be a tipping point as consistent actions become the norm for society. This is our 'Team Wilder' approach and we can all join the team. We hope to effect real social change for nature's recovery and engage and empower communities across Leicestershire and Rutland.

Find out how you can do more for nature in your own life on p10, as part of your business on p20, and with a communal gardening project on p24. Learn more about the farmers making a difference on p28, and inspiring stories of community action on p26.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we look forward to kickstarting our Team Wilder!

Tim Graham

CEO



Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust *Get in touch*

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

Email info@lrwt.org.uk

Telephone 0116 262 9968

Address The Old Mill, 9 Soar Lane,
Leicester, LE3 5DE

Website lrwt.org.uk

Registered charity number 210531

facebook.com [leicswildlife](https://www.facebook.com/leicswildlife)

twitter.com [leicswildlife](https://twitter.com/leicswildlife)

instagram.com [leicswildlife](https://www.instagram.com/leicswildlife)

youtube.com [user/lrwt56](https://www.youtube.com/user/lrwt56)

Protecting and enhancing the wildlife and wild places of Leicestershire and Rutland and engaging people with nature.

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

Chairman Tony Clarke

Vice Chair Anthony Biddle

Hon. Secretary Maggie Morland

Hon. Treasurer Ann Tomlinson

CEO Tim Graham

Head of Conservation John Clarkson

Head of Engagement Jamie Perry

Membership Officer Josephine Taylor

The Wildlife Trust Magazine Team

Editor Lucy McRobert

Designers Yarwood Associates

UK Editor Tom Hibbert

UK Designer Ben Cook

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor, CEO 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.



18



28



Contents

- 4** Read the latest news and stories from LRWT and around the UK.
- 8** Cel Spellman shares his passion for campaigning for wildlife.
- 10** Discover the top ways to take action for nature in Leicestershire and Rutland with John Clarkson.
- 16** Go on an autumn amble around Great Merrible Wood.
- 18** Find the best spots to see awesome otters around the UK.
- 20** Learn about our Wild Wellbeing Days and how your business could benefit.
- 22** Swoop into the spooky world of bats.
- 24** Be inspired to take up community gardening with Kate Bradbury.
- 26** Meet Melanie and her brilliant Brownies who created a meadow in their neighbourhood.
- 28** Wildlife-friendly farming could help restore our natural world: find out what we're doing.
- 32** Get out and about with our guide to events and activities.

6 ways to get involved with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

Gift membership Help someone feel more connected to nature by signing them up as a member
lrwt.org.uk/gift-membership

Donate From purchasing land to vaccinating badgers to helping bats flourish, we rely on your donations
lrwt.org.uk/donate

Legacy You can include a gift in your Will for wildlife and the future of our local natural world
lrwt.org.uk/legacy

Businesses Become a corporate supporter of LRWT and make wildlife part of your business
lrwt.org.uk/corporate

Wildlife Watch Inspire a wild child by signing them up for our junior membership, Wildlife Watch!
lrwt.org.uk/wildlife-watch

Local Groups Be inspired by walks, talks, events and activities in your local area
lrwt.org.uk/local-groups



Young Leicester artists celebrate their wild side

A young Leicester artist has won a wildlife-themed graffiti mural for her school with her take on an eye-level encounter with a hedgehog. Yasmine Mohammed, a Year 6 pupil at Queensmead Primary Academy, has been chosen as the winner of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust's 2021 Wild Art Competition. Entrants were challenged to create a piece of art that showed off the UK's wonderful wildlife. An expert panel had a tough task picking three prize winners from 59 entries, but Yasmine's close-up depiction of a hedgehog in its natural environment impressed them. Yasmine will receive a set of art materials and has also won a graffiti mural created by artists from Graffwerk, the team behind Leicester's Bring the Paint Festival. Graffwerk will now work with pupils at Queensmead Primary Academy to decide which animals will feature in the mural.

The top three prize winners were:

- ❶ Yasmine Mohammed, age 11, Queensmead Primary Academy
- ❷ Neva Zaman, age 11, Evington Valley Primary School
- ❸ Abidah Hossain, age 5, Medway Community Primary School

Rebecca Catlow, Yasmine's teacher, said: "We are delighted that Yasmine's amazing hedgehog has been awarded first prize. It is lovely to see her talent recognised by an expert panel of artists – it is such an achievement for her, and we are so proud."

The Wild Art Competition is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, through the Trust's Wild Forest School project. The judging panel comprised Leicester-based wildlife artist Richard Jarvis, aerosol artist Izzy Hoskins from Graffwerk, Graduate Project Officer for Leicester City Council Hollie Campbell, and Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust's Head of Engagement Jamie Perry.

All the entries can be seen at wildforestschool.org.uk/wild-art



SECOND PLACE



THIRD PLACE

A literary legacy

A heartfelt thank you to the family of Frederick Littlemore (1929-2002), including Chris, Andrew, Katie and Jane, who have generously donated around 250 books to our LRWT library as part of Frederick's legacy. Fred was a member of the Leicestershire and Rutland Ornithological Society (LROS) from around 1957, serving at different times as a committee member, Chairman and being appointed Life President from 1997-2002. He was the wildfowl count organiser for Leicestershire from 1969-75 and a counter at Stanford Reservoir from 1963 until his death. In 2007, together with other past presidents of LROS, the Shoveler Hide at Rutland Water Nature Reserve was opened in his memory.



Gratitude is the only attitude

In July we spent time reaching out to our volunteers, members, local groups, corporate partners, collaborators, trustees, staff and funding organisations to show our gratitude for the amazing support we regularly receive as part of our **#31DaysOfThanks** campaign. It goes without saying that we hope that you got thoroughly thanked, but as some of you prefer mainly to read our magazine over our digital articles we wanted to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to you for all the amazing things you do to support LRWT.

The last year has been extremely challenging for everyone, and yet your support for our work and appreciation of the importance of connecting with and protecting nature has never been stronger. As we look ahead to the challenges we face to aid nature's recovery we are so glad to have you walking by our side. Thank you for being part of our movement. We are incredibly grateful.



200 ospreys fledged!

To celebrate the 200th osprey chick fledged from the Rutland Water area, we have launched our 25th Anniversary Osprey Appeal. Funds raised will bring the magic of ospreys to schoolchildren across the region, celebrating bird conservation, marvellous migration and developing a childhood connection with nature. 25 years after our pioneering translocation project, we have had another brilliant season, with eight successful breeding pairs this year raising 18 chicks: this amounts to more than 200 chicks fledged since 2001.

Support us: lrwt.org.uk/rutlandospreys

056 © STEPHEN GRUNDY.



The cherry on top

This June, a rare fungus was found growing in Cherry Woods at Rutland Water Nature Reserve by our Species and Recording Officer Tim Sexton. *Psathyrella typhae* is a rare species associated with the decaying material of bulrushes. There are only seven records with the National Biodiversity Network and just twelve records in the Kew database. The species identification, new for Rutland, was confirmed by volunteer and fungi expert Roy Lemmon. A specimen has since been requested by Kew Gardens for inclusion in their fungarium, a reference collection of fungi containing 1.25 million dried specimens from around the world (375,000 from the UK). Tim said: "It is brilliant to think that the specimen from Rutland will join the archive that includes historic material collected by the likes of Charles Darwin and John Ray. The closest records to us are either Ely in Cambridgeshire or Sheffield, and this is the first record for Leicestershire and Rutland."

PSATHYRELLA TYPHAEE © TIM SEXTON.



UK UPDATE

The trouble with wind

Turbines harness wind for renewable energy, but what is the cost to our wildlife?



We are facing two inextricably linked crises — nature's loss and climate change. We cannot solve one without tackling the other and therefore our efforts to make progress must recognise and reflect their connection, including in our seas. Healthy seas are critical to tackling both climate change and achieving nature's recovery.

It is widely supported that dramatically reducing our carbon emissions, particularly from burning fossil fuels, is a critical step to tackling climate change. Transitioning to alternative energy sources, including marine renewables (renewable energy sources based in our seas), will be part of this package. Offshore wind farms are often put forward as the best solution.

However, in reality offshore wind farm development cannot be considered truly green, as it does have a damaging impact on the environment. It can cause loss of important marine

habitats where fish, such as sandeel, live, which fuel the food web for other fish, birds, porpoises, whales and dolphins. The blades of turbines also pose a collision risk to many bird species. As a result of these impacts, we are already seeing the decline of wildlife in some of our precious Marine Protected Areas.

The scale of ambition for the development of new offshore wind farms by 2050 is staggering, with up to 140GW of offshore wind power currently projected: an incredible 14-fold increase on the 10GW of offshore wind we have in place today. While The Wildlife Trusts recognise that offshore wind will contribute to the UK achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the blinkers must come off if we are to avoid industrialisation of our seas at the expense of the marine environment.

Our seas have been impacted by human activities for decades. Given a chance to recover, it can and will play a leading role in tackling climate change; absorbing and locking away huge amounts of carbon from the atmosphere for centuries and beyond.

Now is the time for balance — solutions to climate change cannot make the ecological crisis worse. We must consider how we can reduce our energy demands so that less offshore wind is required.

The Wildlife Trusts supports the sustainable development of marine renewable energy and is working closely with Government and industry to find solutions to achieve net zero by 2050 and enable nature's recovery. However, this can only be done by everyone working together to find creative and innovative solutions — this may mean that more research and development work is needed by industry to find new ways of building offshore wind farms that benefit marine ecosystems. If we can put man on the moon, there is certainly hope that we can find sustainable solutions to offshore wind farm development.

Find out more about The Wildlife Trusts' work on offshore development at wildlifetrusts.org/development-sea

Underwater noise generated during installation can prevent species such as harbour porpoise from using important feeding areas

UK UPDATE

Flying start to 30 by 30

Nationally, Wildlife Trusts have already raised almost £8 million towards their ambition to kickstart nature's recovery across 30% of our land and seas by 2030. These vital funds will support projects to make new homes for wildlife, join up wild places and promote natural solutions to the climate crisis.

This spring, we unveiled ten new projects that will help nature fight back. The new projects include reviving ice-age



ponds in Norfolk, transforming a 42-acre former Carlisle golf course into an urban bee and butterfly oasis, and quadrupling a Wiltshire nature reserve to help the rare marsh fritillary butterfly thrive.

Of the £8 million total raised so far, over £900,000 has been given by members of the public.

Thank you to everyone who has already supported our campaign to bring nature back.

Find out more and support the campaign at wildlifetrusts.org/30-30-30



Peat extraction is devastating peatlands across the world, yet many retailers are continuing to sell peat-based products

Promise for Peat

The Government has announced plans to phase out the use of peat in horticulture, including a consultation on banning the sale of peat and peat-containing products in the amateur sector by the end of this Parliament.

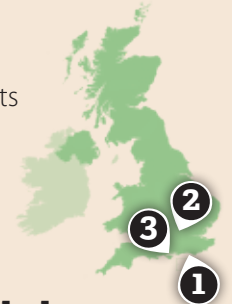
Ten years ago, the Government set a voluntary target for the horticulture sector to end sales to gardeners by 2020. This deadline was missed, and a

recent Wildlife Trust survey revealed that only one of 20 leading garden retailers contacted planned to eliminate peat from its shelves this year. Whilst the Government's announcement is welcome news, it must be backed by action and lead to a ban of peat sales.

See the announcement in full at wtru.st/gov-speech

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



1 Help for kelp

A new byelaw now makes it illegal to trawl with bottom-towed fishing gear within an area off the Sussex coast. This landmark decision will give Sussex's important kelp forests the chance to recover, providing a home for a wide range of wildlife. Find out more at wtru.st/help-kelp

2 Fishing friends

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust is working with anglers in the Colne Valley to improve wetlands for wildlife, including the rare water vole. Fisheries look after many lakes and rivers, and by offering training and support, the Wildlife Trust and their partner, the Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative, are helping them further enhance these habitats for wildlife as well as people. For more info go to wtru.st/hmwt-angling



3 Seagrass saviours

A new partnership launched by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust aims to restore the Solent's seagrass beds. As well as providing a home for wildlife, seagrass protects coasts from erosion and absorbs carbon up to 35 times faster than tropical rainforests. See more at wtru.st/solent-seagrass



Cel Spellman

  @celspellman

Raise your voice



I'm proud to be part of an organisation with a rich history of driving change. As a supporter of The Wildlife Trusts, I know I'm part of a community that stands up and uses its collective voice for nature. Together, we've achieved crucial changes, from reintroducing wildlife like the beaver, to protecting our seas — a huge carbon store — with the Marine Act. All of this plays a massive part in turning the tide against nature's loss and climate change and would not have been possible without people coming together and speaking up.

However, a question that often seems to present itself is, 'Does protesting actually work?'. For me, the answer is simple — a resounding yes! But there are numerous ways to do this. We tend to think of protests as big rallies and marches, which is often the case and can absolutely work. I was privileged to be involved with the *Time is Now* march in 2019 for urgent climate change action; the hope and positivity in the air was palpable. It's moments like these that help you feel like you're not alone and that change can and will come.

The School Climate Strikes also provides a shining example. Young people making their voices, thoughts and feelings clear. For me, these strikes have been one of the biggest reasons we've seen a shift in mindset and conversation around climate over the last few years. Young people's voices are some of the most powerful and they never cease to blow me away with how aware they are, and the absolute drive they have for making the world a better, fairer, greener place.

But marches aren't the only way to make our voices heard. Signing petitions, sharing something we see online, having those difficult, important conversations with friends, or writing to our MP or a business can also have a big impact. 10-year-old Skye from Gwynedd is an inspiration to me; she campaigned for magazines to stop giving away disposable plastic toys. In response, Waitrose said they'll no longer sell children's magazines containing disposable plastic toys, a move single-handedly inspired by Skye, and I've no doubt other businesses will follow suit. That is the power of our voice.

We can also protest with our wallets. Money talks, and by choosing where we spend ours, who we invest in, who we bank with, we can express our beliefs and support businesses or individuals that share them.

It's about putting pressure on those that need the pressure applying. However this is done, you really can make a difference for the environment, for nature, for our wonderful wildlife and in turn, for ourselves and our future. I've no doubt that together we can and will change the world.

To quote Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator*, 'You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure...'

To tackle the climate and nature emergency we face, our natural world needs advocates on its side. Find out about the big issues at



[wildlifetrusts.org/emergency](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/emergency)



SHOUT FOR WILDLIFE

Join over 100,000 people speaking up with The Wildlife Trusts on everything from better laws for wildlife to banning the sale of peat compost. Together our voices can make a difference. You can sign up to our campaigns mailing list to be the first to hear when new campaigns are launching so that you can take your stand for nature's recovery. To register, visit [wildlifetrusts.org/campaigns](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/campaigns)



Cel Spellman is an actor and presenter, an ambassador for The Wildlife Trusts, and an ardent advocate for nature, wildlife and the need to address the climate crisis.

Meadows Appeal raises £115,000!

LRWT is delighted that we have been able to buy a meadow in Charnwood Forest. Thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, we were able to raise £115,000 towards the purchase.

In December 2020, we launched our 'Meadows Appeal', with the aim of saving this diverse habitat from development. Thanks to an outpouring of support, we surpassed our target of £100,000 and secured the land. The meadow will now become part of our network of nature reserves, and our dedicated team of

conservation staff and volunteers will manage the land to ensure it is full of wildflowers and buzzing with life. John Clarkson, Head of Conservation said: "We cannot thank everyone enough for their support. We have lost 97% of wildflower meadows since the 1930s, so each one saved is a great win for wildlife! This meadow will now be protected for all the fantastic wildlife that depends on it and will create more space in our landscape to aid nature's recovery."

Find out more: lrwt.org.uk/news



Meadow brown butterflies can be seen in large numbers, flying low over the grass and flowers. Caterpillars feed on grasses such as fescues, bents and meadow-grasses.

Wild Success!

This year, 36 chicks were born to ten pairs of avocets at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, up from just one breeding pair in 2019. Cossington Meadows saw a record year for barn owl, too, with seven chicks born!

Hugh Dixon – Rest in Peace

We were very saddened to hear of the passing of Hugh Dixon on 4th June 2021 following a short illness. Hugh made a very significant contribution to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust over many years. He played a pivotal role in the formation and early years of LRWT and was instrumental in securing key achievements and successes. A chartered accountant, Hugh was Honorary Treasurer for over thirty years, turning around our early financial situation and ensuring long-term stability. In the late

1990s he became chairman, where he was especially supportive of staff endeavours in planning and overseeing our work and development. He managed the move of the LRWT office to Longfellow Road and the first printing of the colour newsletter. He was a strong advocate of reserve acquisition and was involved in securing Launde Woods, fields adjoining Wymeswold Meadows, Loughborough Big Meadow, Cossington Meadows and others. He saw the start of our involvement at Rutland Water and the

establishment of Rutland Water Nature Reserve, chairing the Rutland Water Nature Reserve steering committee for many years. Hugh remained a member until his passing and rarely missed an LRWT AGM, where he continued to show support for the Trust's work. A true gentleman, Hugh was valued for his practical, no-nonsense approach and counsel. He made a lasting difference to our local wildlife and wild places and will be remembered with much gratitude and affection.



We can be **heroes**



HEDGEHOG © JON HAWKINS.



Hedgehogs are covered in around 7,000 spines, which are actually modified hairs. They can be raised using powerful muscles along their back to protect themselves.

“What can I do to help wildlife?” I love that question! It is life-affirming that people want to do something to make a difference for nature when the challenge seems so enormous and is so urgent. People want to be wildlife heroes and we can show you how to start...

By John Clarkson



As a supporter of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, you've taken the first step. Thank you! It is fantastic that you have a passion for wildlife.

We are familiar with the dire state of the world that supports us: tiny amounts of wilderness left, reduced populations of keystone species, record levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere, a lack of awareness of amazing wildlife. And yet in 2014, more than half the UK population were apparently unaware of any threat to biodiversity. As we enter the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration, targets are emerging to address the world-wide problems for our wildlife by 2030. Later this year, we will see global, world-defining gatherings including the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) and the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15).

Even at a local level we can and must do amazing things. The Wildlife Trusts are aiming to have 30% of land and sea managed for wildlife by 2030, with one in four people actively helping wildlife and playing a part in creating a 'Nature Recovery Network'.

We need champions for wildlife, individuals and communities, to ensure we meet those targets in Leicestershire and Rutland, so what else can you do to help? Do you enjoy making the world a better place, sharing a sense of enjoyment or fighting a sense of wrong? And do you like getting stuck into managing habitats or raising money, engaging and educating others or campaigning for a better future? Saving wildlife needs all these positive actions, and they start with you.

Ten years ago, Sir John Lawton gave us a brilliantly simple mantra for nature's recovery: we need "more, bigger, better and joined-up", to which I would add "messier and more natural", too. It begins with sharing your love for nature, followed by practical actions, then actively leading change. If we all do that, we can bring nature back. Here are ten ideas for your next steps... →

Support a campaign (or two!)

People-power is one of the most underestimated sources of energy and drivers of change. If you believe in something, then campaign for it – and in this case a Wilder Future! You can support our Action for Insects campaign, our call to end the sale of peat in compost and our plea to stop the badger cull in Leicestershire and Rutland.
lrwt.org.uk/campaign



COMMON BLUE BUTTERFLY © AMY LEWIS.



Record your sightings: NatureSpot

For a country with a long history of keeping wildlife diaries, we don't know as much as we ought about the wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland: what, where or how many. We need this knowledge to effectively target our conservation action. You can record what you see, even the common species with local recording project NatureSpot and they will share the data with us. Go to their website or download their app.

naturespot.org.uk



Share your love for nature

Reigniting our creative awareness of wildlife can bring joy to thousands of people, like the Fosse Foxes art trail this summer. Funds were raised for our Meadows Appeal thanks to an auction of art made by an arts group in Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves. Telling a wildlife story, sharing your wildlife photography or following and sharing from our social channels are great ways to inspire friends. Visit the Lyndon Visitor Centre to see amazing wildlife art murals by Graffwerk from Leicester, too!



Wardens for Wildlife

Wardens are guardians of wildlife and wild places. You can join like-minded people out in the landscape locating, surveying and saving species and habitats. There are plenty of local wildlife warden schemes and becoming a Tree Warden or River Warden are two of our favourites.

leicestershire.gov.uk/tree-wardens
wellandriverstrust.org.uk/river-wardens



Put the fun in fundraising

Conserving wildlife costs money! Individual donations are fantastic, but you can get creative, too. Baking, sponsored exercise, yard sales, fancy dress, arts and crafts: the ways to raise money are endless. You could even make us your charity partner at work.

lrwt.org.uk/support-us



WHITE-TAILED BUMBLEBEE © NICK UPTON/2020VISION; FOSSE FOXES © WILL JOHNSTON PHOTOGRAPHY, RIVER WARDEN © MATTHEW ROBERTS; OUTDOOR ART AND CRAFT © ADRIAN CLARKE.



Pickle Illustration team Lauren and Olivia decorate the LRWT Fosse Fox, nicknamed 'Foxglove'.



Grow a wilder garden

In the UK domestic gardens amount to 25% of the 'greenspace' in urban areas. Collectively, they may contain 3 million freshwater ponds and 28 million trees! Imagine what a huge nature reserve that could be. Embrace the messiness, let wood rot naturally, provide water and shelter, plant a tree! Check online for tips or contact our Grow Wild team to talk about schools, workspaces and communal areas.

lrwt.org.uk/wildlife-gardening →





Create a new habitat

We think that less than 10% of the Leicestershire and Rutland landscape can be considered truly wildlife-rich. By 2030, we need that to be nearer to 30%! If you own land, or can influence others that do, then creating new habitat by sowing a wildflower meadow, adding a pond, planting a woodland in the right places would be good not only for wildlife, but also help to address the climate emergency.

lrwt.org.uk/actions



Adopt, convert, mentor

Our target for 2030 is that one in four people should be doing something positive for wildlife. If every member recruited a new member each year for the next four years, we would have more than 250,000 members by 2026. But simply encouraging someone else to be more wildlife-friendly would double the number of people taking action for wildlife! You could give a gift membership or explore projects for young people, like our Green Influencers scheme.

lrwt.org.uk/green-influencers



PEOPLE PLANTING NATIVE WOODLAND © PETER CAIRNS/2020VISION, © JON HAWKINS.

LADYBIRD ON FUNGI © PAUL HOBSON.



Lead a local community

You can work across a parish to create a wildlife action plan, such as going pesticide-free in the parks, managing the verges for wildflowers or putting up boxes for swifts. See p22 for our guide to community gardening with your neighbours and p24 to read about an amazing community meadow project in Thurnby. Helping wildlife recover requires action across different scales of the landscape, including across your neighbourhood. Why not work with your neighbours to connect your gardens together to create a 'hedgehog highway'?

hedgehogstreet.org

“What are we doing?”

Whilst we are encouraging all our members and supporters to take action for wildlife, we want to reassure you that Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust is working hard to help nature recover at a strategic and cross-county level. If we are going to see positive impacts for wildlife, 30% of our land and sea spaces need to be dedicated to nature, with the remaining 70% working with nature if we are to enable it to thrive by 2030.

To bring wildlife back we will continue to explore species reintroductions, focusing on those lost to the area, and build on our leadership first shown by LRWT with the Rutland Osprey Project. We want more nature reserves, and to extend the ones we have already. We need to make sure society manages land better and makes more positive decisions for wildlife; to do this we will have to extend our influence and footprint, building new partnerships and ways of working. Importantly, we also need the action of members and the public to support greater change, including extending and evolving our education and engagement work.

If you're a landowner, business manager or community leader, we would love to chat to you about supporting your efforts to bring back nature. Together, we can all be part of Team Wilder!

Contact info@lrwt.org.uk 🐛

Celebrate living sustainably

Finally, wildlife is in trouble because of the choices we all make: our food, transport and clothes, the houses that we live in, all of which contribute to habitat and species loss (or, in some cases, gain). If everyone in the world lived the same way as the average UK citizen, we would need four planet Earths to support us. Become the ultimate wildlife champion by taking steps every day, no matter how small, towards One Planet Living.

lrwt.org.uk/sustainable-living



© PENNY DIXIE, CARROT BEING PICKED FROM VEGETABLE PATCH © TOM MARSHALL, WATER VOLE © TOM MARSHALL.



Take an autumn amble around Great Merrible Wood



Scarlet elfcup is a bright red, cup-shaped fungus. It is widespread, but scarce, and can be found on fallen twigs and branches, in shady, damp places.

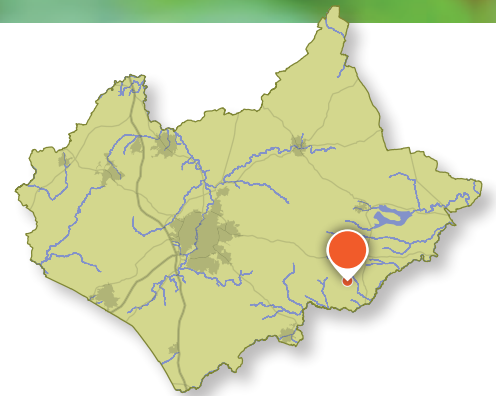
Great Merrible Wood is a small nature reserve on the south slope of the Eye Brook valley. It escaped felling in the 20th century and now holds many large trees. Andy Lear describes this tranquil spot, perfect for immersing yourself in nature.

The name Merrible comes from the medieval chapel or hermitage of Mirabel associated with the parish of Stockerston, thought to have been located to the east in a small woodland called variously Mirabel Hole, Merrivale Holt or le Hollock Merrybell. No trace now remains.

From the access gate, follow the hedge straight to the next field gateway where the wood becomes visible as the ground

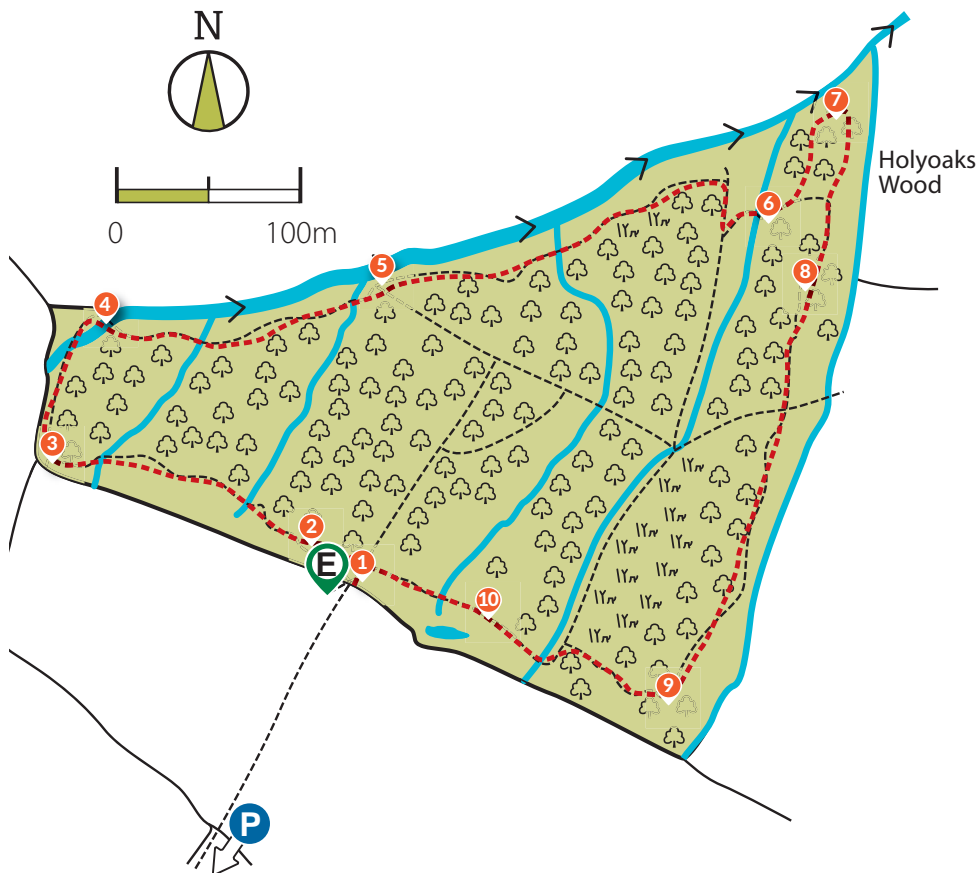
drops away towards Eyebrook Reservoir. To the west is Little Merrible Wood, with Great Merrible Wood ahead. This is a historic landscape, part of the Royal Forest of Rutland, and was a favourite hunting spot for 'Bad King John' of Robin Hood. This is a place of mystery with many old and giant trees, taking you back to a time when forests stretched across the country.

But all is not as it seems. As you pass through the entrance gate **1** note that



SCARLET ELFCUP © CHRIS LAWRENCE, ROE DEER © DON SUTHERLAND.

© HELENA BOLINGBROKE.



there are no great banks marking the woodland edge. This is the first indication that despite its description as an ancient woodland, meaning it has existed since at least 1600, Great Merrible Wood is in fact much younger. Boyce's 1814 map shows what is now woodland was once part of the field behind you. It seems to have developed into woodland over the past 200 years, probably by planting and natural regeneration. Despite this there are many special trees including the magnificent oak standing near the information board. To get a feeling for the special atmosphere enter the tree canopy by turning left on the path ②. Go past an ash tree with a deep split revealing the interior rot. This is a feature of all old trees as they mature and the dead heartwood becomes hollowed out by fungal decay.

The path winds westward parallel to the woodland edge rising and falling over medieval ridge and furrow, which

is easiest to see in winter when the sun is low in the sky. In spring, several typical woodland plants grow here, including bluebells and woodruff. As the path starts to descend look out for an old hollow tree on your left, a haunt of tawny owls ③. Where the path turns east, in a deep gully you can see hard shield fern *Polystichum aculeatum*, unusual for this area ④. It favours wet and shady conditions and its dark green fronds remain throughout the winter. Continuing onwards there are several fallen trees, which we leave as dead wood to rot down providing habitat for fungi and invertebrates. In December and January, the spectacular scarlet elfcup is frequently seen on fallen branches.

The path crosses a woodland ride and follows the woodland edge, marked by a deep gully that reveals the glacial deposits typical of the local geology ⑤. The stream rises quickly in heavy rainfall. It is likely that woodland plants grew from these steep refuges once cultivation of the surrounding land ceased. In the north east corner ⑥, you can leave the path and head towards the woodland edge where



you will find a huge oak ⑦, possibly 400 or 500 years old, perched precariously above the gully and probably an old boundary marker. The crown has been pollarded in the past, with branches cut for firewood at a height sufficient to protect the regrowth from browsing animals. Return to the path. On your left is Holyoaks Wood, which belonged to the parish of Holyoaks, a lost village mentioned in the Domesday Book. On your right is a grove of tall oak trees 100-150 years old ⑧. Listen for the calls of nuthatch and other woodland birds. Continuing upwards, more ancient boundary trees can be seen on your left – both pollard oak and ash with great hollows and massive limbs. At the top the path turns west until it meets one of the woodland rides ⑨. Walking along the woodland edge, to your right you might glimpse one of the giants of the wood – an enormous ash more than 4 metres in circumference ⑩ – before returning to the entrance.

Fact file

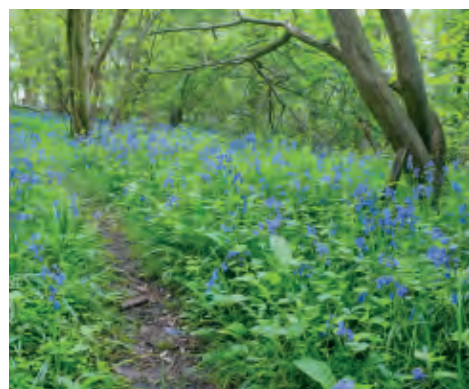
The reserve lies 4km SW of Uppingham and is not visible from the road. Park on the verge on Stockerston Road where a small Wildlife Trust sign marks the access gate. Enter by a field gate, walk along the field with the hedge to your left to the next field, then across to the entrance. There are wet rides and steep slopes. Dogs are welcome on leads.

Nearest postcode: LE15 8RN

Park at: SP 831 958 on verge

Size: 12ha

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



Please respect Government social distancing guidelines when visiting our nature reserves and check our website for updates.



UK NEWS

6 places be awed by an otter

The sight of an otter is one of the most rewarding wildlife experiences. Otters almost disappeared from rivers in England, surviving in small numbers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Thankfully, they are returning and although still elusive, it is possible to spot otters across much of the UK. As well as a ban on hunting in 1978, efforts have been made to improve water quality and harmful chemicals, like DDT, have been banned. Otters are adapted for life near water. They feed on fish, waterbirds, amphibians and crustaceans. Cubs are born underground in 'holts' and these strong swimmers are in the water by just 10-weeks-old. Visit one of our top otter sites or scan local waterways for clues: five-toed footprints and 'spraints' - 'scented messages' that help them to find mates and defend territories. Spraints contain fish bones and have a distinctive smell, reminiscent of jasmine tea!



Be amazed by otters *for yourself*

1 Spey Bay, Scottish Wildlife Trust
The largest shingle beach in Scotland. Visit for a chance to see coastal otters and marine mammals, like seals and bottlenose dolphins.

Where: Moray, IV32 7PJ

2 Balloo Wetland, Ulster Wildlife Trust
A new wetland nature reserve in the heart of Bangor. Large ponds and meandering streams attract visits from otters, with tracks and signs visible all year round.

Where: Bangor, BT19 7PG

3 The Welsh Wildlife Centre and Teifi Marshes, WTSWW

This wetland reserve sits on the banks of the Teifi river near Cilgerran. See otters from the hide and enjoy the visitor centre and nature trails.

Where: Cardigan, SA43 2TB

4 Rutland Water, LRWT

Otters are making a comeback at Rutland Water, with sightings from the hides near Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre becoming more regular. It is thought that their presence is keeping American mink at bay, which is benefiting water voles. Ask at the centre for sightings.

Where: Egleton, LE15 8BT

5 Barton Broad, Norfolk Wildlife Trust

The largest Broad in the Ant Valley. It is home to key wetland species including bittern, marsh harrier, fen orchid, Desmoulin's whorl snail and otters.

Where: Irstead, NR12 8XP

6 Cricklepit Mill, Devon Wildlife Trust

An urban site with easy access and regular otter sightings, often during the day. Enjoy the interpretation area where visitors can watch footage of otters visiting the Mill.

Where: Exeter, EX2 4AB

We're otterly awesome!

Wildlife Trusts across the UK run guided walks and events to spot otters and other wetland wildlife. Search for your nearest at [wildlifetrusts.org/events](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/events)



Your Wild Wellbeing



Using all your senses when exploring wild places is good for your wellbeing.

Now more than ever, we are aware of our mental health. **Harriet Hickin** shares what happened on a Wild Wellbeing Day with the Melton Building Society, and how nature could benefit your business.

From mindfulness techniques and meditation through to treating serious mental illnesses like anxiety and depression, many people are proactively seeking to improve their mental and emotional wellbeing. We know more about mental illnesses, better understand the causes and how to help ourselves and our loved ones manage them.

Perhaps somewhat intuitively, we now know more about the impact that spending time in nature can have on our mental health. Whilst not a replacement for therapies and modern medication, the accumulative positive effects of being close to nature are enormous. And that's exactly why the Melton Building Society have brought their staff to Rutland Water Nature Reserve today: to encourage them to spend time in and really connect with nature.

A wild day out

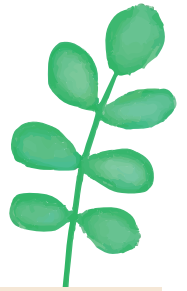
The day starts at Lyndon Visitor Centre, where the group learn more about the Rutland Osprey Project, looking at the webcams and watching birds on the feeders. A wellbeing walk follows, meandering through the meadows to one of the birdwatching hides to try and catch sight of the ospreys. Along the way we observe nature around us, taking in the different colours, textures, smells and sounds. We hear a chiffchaff and the distinctive call of a cuckoo, and spot a blue damselfly, a red admiral and wildflowers including common spotted orchid, ragged robin and yellow rattle.

Returning to Teal Hide we take part in a wild meditation



session, listening to the water and focusing on our breathing. These simple techniques can be done anywhere, but in a natural setting feel even more





worthwhile day out. “My overall wellbeing had definitely improved,” said one participant, whilst another added “the day surpassed all expectations. I felt revived and eager to spend more time in nature.” Another said that “I felt great, ready to take part in conservation, learn more about nature and feel like I know how to improve my wellbeing.”

Melton Building Society are the first business in Leicestershire and Rutland to take advantage of our Wild Wellbeing Days.

Good for business

At some point in their career, as many as 60% of employees will experience a mental health problem. This isn't just bad news for them: the knock-on effects of time off sick and poor productivity levels aren't good for businesses, so it is in the interest of companies to support their employees to be happier and healthier. Melton Building Society are the first business in Leicestershire and Rutland to take advantage of our Wild Wellbeing Days. Melton Building Society have supported the work of LRWT for many years, recently taking the next step by joining us as Wildlife Partners – the gold standard of corporate sponsorship for our work.

“The Society has championed sustainability in creating mortgage and savings products that recognise eco-friendly behaviour for many years, so forging a relationship with our local Wildlife Trust was a natural connection for us,” explained Simon Taylor, Chief Executive of the Melton Building Society. “We are very excited to be able to build on our green initiatives by

relaxing. Lunch, locally sourced, takes place in the Volunteer Training Centre, followed by a wild workshop with Head of Conservation John Clarkson, who explains about our work, the importance of nature conservation and how the group can help nature.

At the beginning of the day, participants admitted to feeling tired, nervous, even sceptical, but by the end people felt calm, relaxed and refreshed, having enjoyed a

encouraging enjoyment of the natural world and increasing awareness of the fantastic work of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.”

Research suggests that there are five key pillars for wild wellbeing, and our activities draw on these:

- 1 CONNECT**
encouraging participants to socialise and work together
- 2 TAKE NOTICE**
ensuring that people use all their senses to consciously notice nature
- 3 GIVE**
empowering participants to give back to nature
- 4 BE ACTIVE**
exercising our brains and bodies
- 5 KEEP LEARNING**
learning new skills and more about nature

FIND OUT MORE

Our Wild Wellbeing Days start at £500 for up to ten participants, and include:

- A day-long experience at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, including a locally sourced lunch.
- A Wild Wellbeing Guide for each participant.
- A copy of our nature reserves guide, worth £6.99 for each participant.

lrwt.org.uk/wildwellbeing

Melton Building Society are Wildlife Partner corporate supporters of LRWT. Find out more about them themelton.co.uk



© HARRIET HICKIN.





Night RIDERS

Take a shadowy flight into the twilight world of bats with Helena Bolingbroke





Summer nights may be shortening, but they are alive with activity, as a host of nocturnal creatures make the most of the hours of darkness. Tawny owls listen for rodents rustling across woodland floors, moths flicker around night-scented flowers and bats swoop through the air, hunting the insects that swarm in the night.

There are eighteen species of bat in the UK, twelve of which have been recorded in Leicestershire and Rutland, from Natterer's bats that snatch spiders from their webs, to Daubenton's bats that fish insects from the surface of lakes and rivers.

The most widespread and frequently seen are common pipistrelles, zigzagging through the air as they feast on up to 3,000 insects a night. They have been recorded at many of our nature reserves and occupy a range of habitats, from city centres, deciduous woodland rides and edges, to farmlands, gardens and hedgerows. Pipistrelles are tiny, weighing between 4-7g and echolocate around 45kHz. Soprano pipistrelles are almost impossible to separate in flight, but favour



wetland habitats and echolocate around 55kHz; Nathusius' pipistrelles have also been recorded, but although widespread are rarer.

Noctule bats are gentle giants, weighing up to 40g with a wingspan of 33-45cm. They have one of the loudest calls and echolocate at a lower frequency, around 20-25kHz. They are fairly easy to identify when using a bat detector, as they make a recognisable 'chip-chop' sound. Children and some adults can often hear these without a detector. In contrast, brown

long-eared bats are very quiet; they are often seen before they are heard. Their appearance is distinctive, even in flight, because of their large ears.

We are working with the Allerton Project at Loddington and neighbouring land owners to monitor how rare barbastelle bats are using hedgerows within the Leighfield Forest Living Landscape. This will allow us to improve connectivity between our nature reserves, privately owned woodlands and important foraging areas.

Brandt's and whiskered bats have both been recorded at Rutland Water. Both echolocate around 45 kHz and share a common habitat, preferring parkland, woodland and gardens. Barbastelle, Leisler's, greater horseshoe and serotine have also been noted in our counties.

You can help bats by encouraging insect populations to thrive. Find out how



lrwt.org.uk/action-insects

OUR TIPS FOR BATWATCHING



Use a bat detector

Bat detectors pick up the high-pitched echolocation calls of bats, making them audible to humans. Different species echolocate at different frequencies, so we can work out which species of bat we are observing.



Study the flight

Bats have different flight patterns. Common pipistrelles fly erratically, noctules have a direct flight with sudden swoops and brown long-eared bats have a slow, hovering flight.



Go where the insects are

Bats are found in a range of habitats, from farmland to woodlands and gardens. They can often be seen hunting around features that attract insects, like trees, hedges and woodland edges.



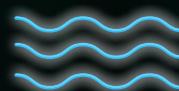
Arrive before sunset

Bats are easiest to spot around dusk, when they emerge to feed and there is still enough light to see them. Our largest bat, the noctule, is often the first to emerge, sometimes before the sun has set.



Watch the weather

It is harder for bats to hunt on damp or windy nights, so choose a dry, still evening for your batwatching expedition.



Wait by water

Bats are often found around waterways. Stretches of sheltered, still or slow-moving water attract clouds of insects that they can hunt.



UK NEWS

Community Gardening

Come together with your community to make more space for nature.

Add bird boxes and bee hotels

Help wildlife move into your shared garden, by providing homes! Find that DIY expert in your community and get building.

Set up a community compost heap

These work really well, helping to reduce waste sent to landfill as well as provide a home for wildlife and compost for mulching.

Plant native trees

Many parks and shared spaces have room for a few trees and people love planting them. Set up a crowdfunder to buy a few and plant them together with your neighbours.

Make a small pond

A source of water is really important for wildlife, for drinking and bathing. People will be drawn there too if you pop in a bench.

Grow plants for bees

Everyone knows bees are in trouble and wants to help them. Grow herbs like lavender, oregano, rosemary and chives.



Twice a year, I meet up with other members of my local community to plant up and tidy the planters on my local high street. While we work we chat, discuss planting methods and the best plants for bees. Some of us take clippings home to compost. Many of us end up in the pub afterwards. It's a lovely thing to do, both for the community, the local wildlife and ourselves. Thanks to Covid we missed a session last year, but we have a date in the diary and I'm looking forward to getting back to work.

Community gardens and gardening help bring neighbourhoods together. They can be on virtually any patch of land, from large planters on a main road like the ones I tend, to a park or church grounds (or a section of them) — I've even seen community gardens set up in raised beds on a little corner of pavement. The space doesn't matter, it's what you do with it that counts. Whether you grow veg, flowers

or focus on wildlife gardening there's plenty of reward to reap from your efforts. You'll learn more about planting for nature, and can then pass this knowledge on to other members of your community, young and old. As a result, you'll bring more nature to your and others' doorsteps.

If you want to start gardening with your local community then start with your local park. There may already be a 'Friends of' group set up that you can join, but if there isn't then set one up yourself — other 'Friends of' groups should be able to help you. You'll be amazed how many people in your community want to come out and help improve the area, and you'll make new friends, too!



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

For more tips on how to make green spaces wilder, visit:



wildlifetrusts.org/take-action-insects

Grow vegetables

Many people want to grow veg but lack the confidence. Start with courgettes, beans and strawberries. Teach people how to sow seeds and raise crops themselves.

Garden organically

Use a combination of companion planting and wildlife gardening to move away from using chemicals, helping your community to learn how to garden in a wildlife-friendly way.

Create mini habitats

Make log, leaf and stick piles for wildlife to live in, and leave seedheads and long grass over winter. Children will love making (and exploring!) homes for wildlife.

BUTTERFLY
AND BEE
GARDEN



MY WILD LIFE



“I’m always up for a challenge!”

Melanie, Thurnby, Leicester

We’re meeting people in Leicestershire and Rutland who are making a difference for wildlife. Lucy McRobert meets Melanie Wakley from Thurnby, who has been working with her local Brownie unit to create a parish wildflower meadow.

What is the project and where did your inspiration come from?

We wanted to create a wildflower meadow on a grass verge in our village

of Thurnby. I read an article by Plantlife saying that 97% of ancient wildflower meadows had been destroyed since the 1930s. Plantlife had a vision for Britain’s road verges to be managed for wildlife, restoring flower-rich habitats along our road networks. I thought this might be slightly ambitious for our village, but I’m always up for a challenge!

How did your Brownie unit get involved?

I told my Brownie unit about the loss of wildflowers and asked them if they thought we could help. They were very excited about the project and we decided



“I read an article saying that 97% of ancient wildflower meadows had been destroyed since the 1930s.”

Then COVID-19 reared its head and with great disappointment we had to cancel our event. However, spring was approaching, and boxes of seeds were itching to get into the roped-off ground. My husband and I began working on our own, but heart-warmingly I was contacted by parents wanting to help. With careful coordination, families, working in their own family groups and at separate times helped to get the ground ready and finally the seeds were sown, leaving nature to do her work.

What have been the results?

Flowers popped up everywhere – foxgloves, forget-me-nots, red campion, scarlet pimpernel, marigolds and lots more. It looked lovely and we received lots of comments and emails about the project saying how much people had enjoyed the flowers. The Brownies also painted rainbows and pinned them to the ropes. The project began to grow a

wildflower meadow but with the onset of Coronavirus and lockdown, it turned into a focus for ‘Rainbows of Hope’ with the wildflowers cheering everyone up as they walked around the village.



© DR KAREN PATEL.

we should plant wildflowers on the grass verge outside of our Guiding & Scouting building.

What kinds of activities were involved?

We had to ask the council for permission to plant the wildflowers and approached Coles Nursery in Thurnby to see if they would donate some seeds. Then we had to take the top layer of grass off ready to sow the seeds in bare soil. We roped off the area to remind people not to mow it once it was sown and arranged the day for the Brownies to meet and do the work.

**“Just go for it!
The rewards are amazing!”**



© BRUCE WAKLEY.



© MR ANDREWS.

What are you planning next?

We have begun work at the side of our HQ building. There was a massive bank of briars which has been cut down following a subsidence issue at an adjacent property. We have put a polythene sheet over the area to kill the roots and then we plan to fill it with wildflowers for pollinators, too.

What would you say to someone looking to do something similar?

Contact the council early on and get NatureSpot involved. They did a survey of the area to tell us what wildflowers were growing and gave us a webpage for our village to list our special wild places and what's growing there. It's been so helpful. Just go for it! The rewards are amazing!

© M/S ANGELIKA BLACHNIO.



Contact us if you or someone you know could feature in a future issue of *Wild!* We're looking for inspiring stories from people like you!



Farming with **Nature**

Farmland has potential to benefit our struggling wildlife, but as **Ellie Brodie** reveals, there's a lot of work to be done.



Yellow wagtails feast on farmland insects, but have declined by 68% since the 1970s



Ellie is a passionate advocate of nature-friendly farming and has been leading The Wildlife Trusts' national land management policy and influencing work since 2016

Let me paint a picture of a farming landscape that makes space for nature. Wildflowers fill the farms with colour, covering upland hay meadows and lowland field margins, blooming in hedgerows and verges. This profusion of pollen and nectar supports a dazzling and buzzing array of butterflies, bees and other wild pollinators. New greenery encourages all sorts of beetles, bugs, flies and caterpillars, opening up a buffet for birds, from sweet-singing skylarks to wading birds like lapwings.

Small mammals like wood mice and field voles also gorge themselves on insects, as well as hedgerow berries and nuts, occupying an important mid-way point in the food chain, in turn prey for badgers and buzzards. Ponds, ditches and dykes provide spawning areas for frogs, toads and newts, and homes for darting dragon- and damselflies.

If you're lucky, by day you might spot a water vole nibbling stems along a grassy bank or a brown hare bounding across a field. By night you may see the dark shadows of bats swooping across the sky, or the spectral shape of a barn owl quartering a field.

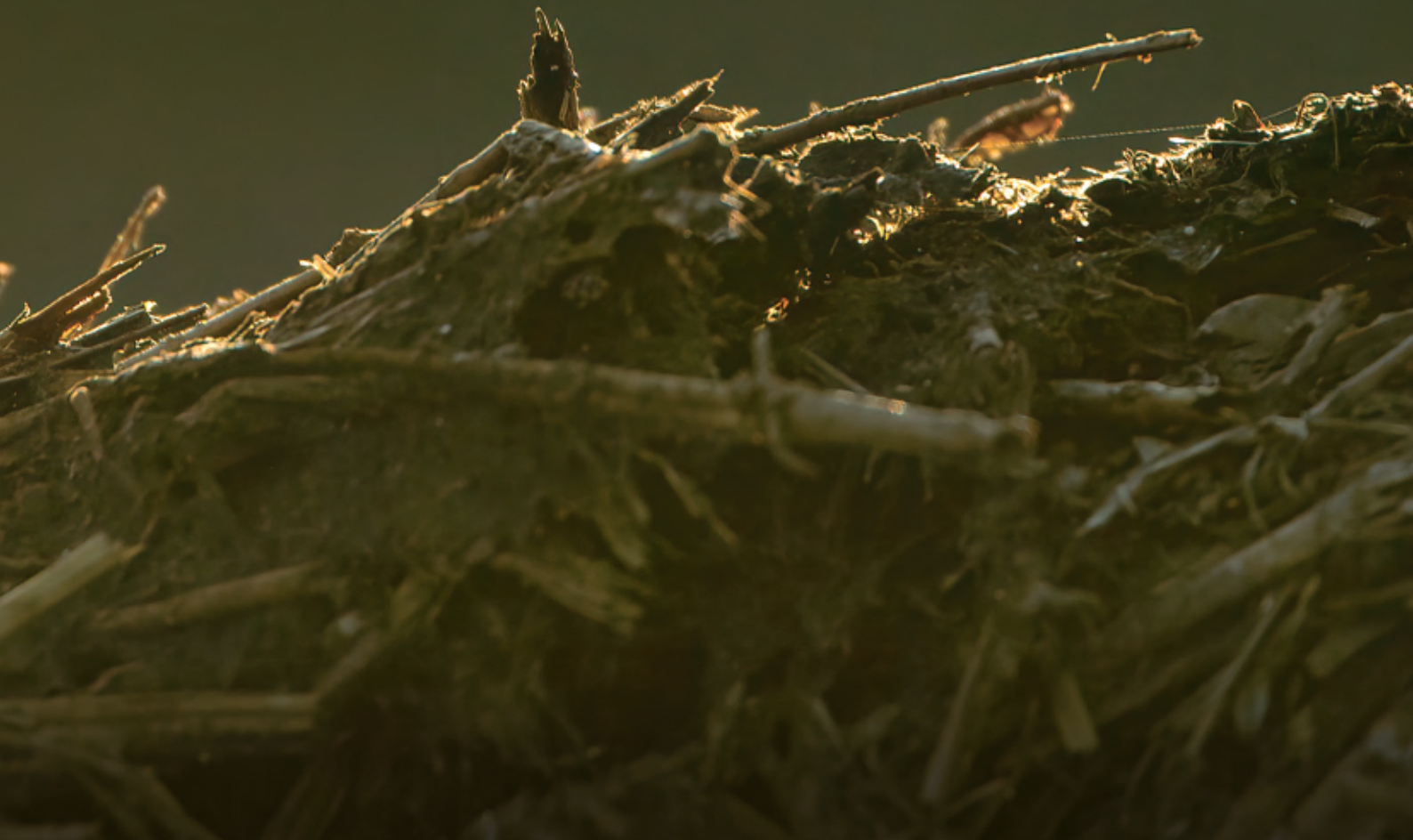
This is a landscape full of life, busy with birdsong and bees. Now trade the variety and complexity of this picture with one of monoculture and monotony. This, sadly, is the more realistic and commonplace version of farmland that exists today.

Farming at scale

Farmland makes up the vast majority — around three quarters — of land use in the UK. Given its scale, it makes sense that what happens in the farmed environment has a huge impact on wildlife.

In today's farming, vast swathes of the countryside are given over to doing one thing at scale: from growing maize, sugar beet, or Sitka spruce to battery chicken farming or factory-scale dairy farming. With scale and efficiency comes doing one thing, and one thing only. This generally means a high level of inputs from synthetic fertilisers, lethal insecticides, toxic weedkillers or the routine use of antibiotics in livestock. It also means uniformity and monoculture — be this conifer plantations, drained upland bogs or effectively a green desert of a single arable crop and nothing else.

Farming on this industrial scale impacts on nature and on the climate. Agricultural chemicals and slurry leech into waterways, harming fish, insects, amphibians and mammals like water voles and otters. Insecticides kill the flying, crawling and wiggling insects that other creatures higher up the food chain depend on — including us humans, who rely on pollinators for around a third of the world's food crop production. Nitrogen-based fertilisers ruin soil health and contribute to climate change. →





BEE © GILLIAN DAY; BROWN HARE © ANDREW PARKINSON/2020VISION

Join Team Wilder!
 If you're a farmer or land manager, get in touch to find out how we can support you in bringing back nature.

Habitat destruction, from the loss of both upland and lowland hay meadows to the removal of features, which provide corridors for wildlife — the hedgerows, ditches and strips of woodland — to create larger and simpler areas to crop or graze has caused the plummeting fortunes of a wide range of wildlife; from dormice and bats to breeding waders like snipe and rare wildflowers, grasses and shrubs.

Driven by policy

Agriculture policy has incentivised this model of farming for decades. But now is a time of change, as the UK has left the EU and therefore the Common Agricultural

Policy (CAP). In November 2020, the first domestic Agriculture Act was passed since 1947, moving us into a period of transition towards post-EU agriculture policies. This means what farmers are paid for and the rules they have to follow will change; and as agricultural policy is devolved, this will vary across the four UK countries.

Under the CAP the majority of funding for farmers (88%) was made through area-based payments schemes. Farmers were paid to comply with a basic set of rules and in return received a payment based on how much land they owned. The remaining 12% of the budget was for schemes that provided environmental benefit. Around

£2.4 billion was distributed in this way across the four UK countries.

The Westminster Government has committed to maintaining the agricultural budget until the next general election — expected in 2024. In England and Wales, governments are refocusing the agricultural spend away from area-based payments and towards specific activities that farmers can do to tackle environmental issues, including wildlife loss, climate change and water pollution. Scotland is continuing and improving the CAP until 2024.

Farmland makes up the vast majority, about three quarters, of land use in the UK

Whilst refocusing spend towards environmental activities is positive, a research report The Wildlife Trusts released with the RSPB and National Trust in 2019 found that much more is needed: the entire agricultural budget if spent on the environment would not be enough to recover nature on farmland in its current state.



Wildflower margins are great for pollinators like bees and butterflies



The Wildlife Trusts' long-standing partnership with Jordans Cereals helps the farmers who grow oats for Jordans to farm in harmony with nature. Every farmer in the Jordans Farm partnership is committed to managing at least 10% of their farmed land for wildlife and works closely with a farm advisor from their local Wildlife Trust, protecting wildlife from barn owls to butterflies. Collectively, they manage more than 4,000 hectares for wildlife, including:

- **475 ha** field margins
- **94** ponds
- **717 km** of hedgerows
- **136 km** of waterways
- **692 ha** of woodland

Find out more at wildlifetrusts.org/jordans



Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust provide advice to two farmers as part of the Jordans Farm Partnership. These farms now provide year-round food and connectivity of habitats for wildlife with small but effective changes in the management. Hedgerows are allowed to grow taller and produce an abundance of flowers and fruit. Wide margins and field

corners are left to develop into strips of rough grassland and provide undisturbed habitat for invertebrates and small mammals. Birds feed on the seeds of weeds that grow in stubble fields which are left over the winter as well as in specially sown bird food plots.

Departing from the EU means the rules will change. At The Wildlife Trusts we continue to press for high environmental standards. This includes pushing for new legislation, as with the Environment Bill currently making its way through Parliament and through new regulations. Wildlife Trusts Wales, for example, was instrumental in influencing the Welsh Government earlier this year to introduce new regulations for water pollution from agriculture. Regulations need enforcing, and in England, deep cuts to regulators like the Environment Agency limit its ability to enforce regulations like Farming Rules for Water.

providing advice to farmers supplying oats to Jordans Cereal on how to provide for nature on their land, whilst demonstrating how farming and nature can go hand in hand through our own working farms from Cumbria down to Dorset. And in Yorkshire, we're providing traineeships in livestock management and grazing.

You can help farmland wildlife from home by supporting your Wildlife Trust and by taking action for nature: stop using chemicals and use natural flea repellents on your dogs and cats rather than ones with neonicotinoids that kill bees and other flying insects; create wildlife friendly habitat where you're able and plant a

wildflower window box or make a pond in your garden; support local nature friendly farmers and go organic where possible; and visit local farms and find out what they are doing. 🍷

Find out more about The Wildlife Trusts' work for farmland wildlife at

wildlifetrusts.org/farming

Besides our work influencing policy and legislation, Wildlife Trusts across the UK are working to help farmland wildlife, both on land we own and through advice we give others. We are restoring hay meadows in Lancashire and rewetting fenland in Cambridgeshire. We're reintroducing and supporting threatened species — from dormice in Nottinghamshire to water voles in Essex. We're helping farmers work together to join up their land to provide highways for bees in Worcestershire and advising them on how to minimise their use of chemicals in Shropshire. We're

Untrimmed hedges and wildflower verges at the sides of agricultural fields create corridors for wildlife





Events and Activities

September 2021 – January 2022

Programme
We have moved
our events
programme online



We offer an interesting and varied programme of events for all ages to get involved with, organised by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and our Local Groups.

We are continuing to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation. To allow for flexibility in changing dates, venues and times, we have moved most of our events programme online for now. We will adhere to Government guidance and encourage others to do the same. All events advertised online contain details of times, dates, venues, booking, prices where applicable and useful information. Anyone booked on an event or volunteering activity will be notified of any changes. This programme is liable to change or cancellation, for which LRWT can accept no liability. Members and non-members are welcome unless otherwise stated.



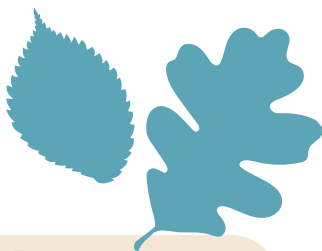
Our full events programme is available at: lrwt.org.uk/events



LRWT AGM

Wednesday 17th November, 7:00pm

The AGM is a chance for members to hear more about LRWT's exciting work over the last year, meet our staff and trustees, and celebrate what we have achieved together, thanks to your support. According to our 2020 survey, you enjoyed our first online AGM and many more members took part than ever before. With the COVID-19 situation still uncertain, we will be holding our 2021 AGM online again. This will allow us to deliver our governance responsibilities in the safest way and allow members to vote on resolutions. It's important we have your email address if you wish to take part. Please contact Jo Taylor at membership@lrwt.org.uk to update your contact details. Further details of the AGM will be sent out with the Annual Review in October and will be available at lrwt.org.uk/agm



Local Groups

Some Local Groups are hoping to restart their face-to-face talks and events this year, whilst others are opting to stay online for now. To find out more, check our website or get in touch with your Local Group below.

Charnwood Local Group

Woodhouse Eaves.

Contact Kate Moore on 01509 891005, katemoore123@yahoo.co.uk, or John Spencer on 0116 236 4279.

Great Bowden Local Group

Great Bowden.

Contact Bruce White on 01858 467976.

Humberstone Local Group

Humberstone.

Contact Alison Gardner on 0116 241 3598.

Melton Mowbray Local Group

Melton Mowbray.

Contact Peter Dawson on 01664 852119, peter.dawson69@ntlworld.com.

North West Local Group

Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Contact David Maltby on 01530 222934 or Margaret Mabey on 01530 412410.

Oadby & Wigston Local Group

Oadby.

Contact Stuart Mucklejohn on 0116 281 0835, owgroup.lrwt@gmail.com.

Rutland Local Group

Volunteer Training Centre, Hambleton.

Contact Becky Howard on 07908 252271.

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Contact Dr David Duckett on

0116 259 7231, info@badgergroup.org.uk.

Local Group Talks

More events will be added throughout the autumn, so check our online programme for new additions.

SEPTEMBER

Oadby & Wigston Local Group

Thursday 2nd September, 7:30pm

Katrina van Grouw - ONLINE

Unnatural Selection - evolution at the hand of man

Leicestershire and Rutland Badger Group

Thursday 9th September, 7:30pm

Katie Lee - ONLINE

Badgers & Hedgehogs

Tuesday 14th September, 7:30pm

Ralph & Brenda Todd - ONLINE

An Antarctic Adventure

Great Bowden Group

Wednesday 15th September, 7:30pm

Bruce White - Village Hall, Great Bowden

A Birder's Year: Autumn & Winter

OCTOBER

Leicestershire and Rutland Badger Group

Thursday 14th October, 7:30pm

Tim Sexton - ONLINE

The Wonders of Willow

Rutland Group

Monday 18th October, 7:30pm

Clare Sambridge - Volunteer Training Centre, Rutland Water

The Soar and Wreake Living Landscape

Great Bowden Group

Wednesday 20th October, 7:30pm

Jeff Blincow - Village Hall, Great Bowden

Top Wildlife Sites in the UK (£2.50 members/£3 non-members)

Oadby & Wigston Group

Friday 29th October, 7:30pm

Richard Bashford - ONLINE

Wildlife and Birds of Poland

NOVEMBER

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Thursday 11th November, 7:30pm

Dr Pam Mynott - ONLINE

Badgers: their bizarre biology and behaviour

Great Bowden Group

Wednesday 17th November, 7:30pm

Tony Cook - Village Hall, Great Bowden

Linnets, Lapwings and Little Brown Jobs: the Joy of Birds' Names

(£2.50 members/£3 non-members)

Oadby & Wigston Group

Friday 26th November, 7:30pm

Ken Rasmussen - ONLINE

Travels with my camera in North Norfolk

JANUARY

North West Group

Saturday 1st January, 1:00pm

New Year's Day walk

Enjoy exploring Snibston Country Park with its many opportunities for wildlife and exercise.

Meet at the former Snibston Museum.





Other events we hope to offer this autumn

lrwt.org.uk/events

Guided activities at Rutland Water

From guided wildlife walks to weekend courses, wildlife photography workshops to identification classes, family drop-in sessions to interesting talks. Events run from the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Lyndon Visitor Centre or the Volunteer Training Centre. Look out for Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walks, Guided Wildlife Walks with Jeff and specialist walking tours looking for waders, wildfowl and other autumn wildlife.

Fun for all the family

Exciting outreach and education programmes for children, families and young people, including Wild Forest School; our Osprey Education programme; Wildlife Watch events; Wild Tots and Wild Play for younger children and holiday clubs; activities, events and courses, plus sessions for home-educators.

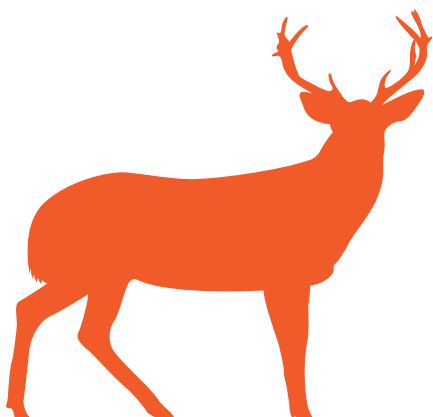
Wildlife Book Club

Our Wildlife Book Club takes place once a month at the Volunteer Training Centre, Rutland Water, on a Wednesday from 11:00 – 13:00. We select a couple of books,

making the most of contemporary nature writing and classic literature. Free to attend.

Wild Walks, identification courses and activities

Our expert staff and volunteers offer Wild Walks on nature reserves and identification courses on specific taxa and species. You'll learn about the flora and fauna of the area, as well as interesting facts about our nature reserves, how and why we manage them, and benefit from tips on field craft.



Wildlife Watch

Back to Wild Play

Over the summer, more than 100 local children in Leicester, and Hinckley and Bosworth areas enjoyed the return of our Wild Play activities, with many families taking part in several sessions over the holidays. They got muddy, played with colour, discovered minibeasts, worked with tools to create items from wood at Burbage Common and Attenborough Arboretum. The highlight for many was the final session on fire, where they learnt how to light a fire safely and cooked some yummy food over a campfire. Check out the Autumn Wild Times newsletter and Family eNews for more activities coming soon.

The Attenborough Arboretum sessions were supported by Leicester City Council as part of their Covid-safe Communities Fund. The Burbage Common Wild Play activities were run in partnership with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

Wildlife Watch

Our two Wildlife Watch groups are currently fully booked.

Contact Rachel Ibbotson on ww@lrwt.org.uk to be added to the waiting list. You can still get involved by doing your **Hedgehog** and **Kestrel Award** activities at home. See the Members Hub for more information.

Wildlife Watch Members Hub

Keep up to date with all things Wildlife Watch on the new section of our online Members Hub, including activities, events and campaigns.

 Find out more: lrwt.org.uk/family-members

Sign up for the
Go Wild Family eNews:
[lrwt.org.uk/
learn-and-discover/
families](http://lrwt.org.uk/learn-and-discover/families)



Green Influencers start inspiring a wilder Leicester

It has been an exciting time for the Green Influencers Scheme, with new groups established at three Leicester schools and initial online meetings starting with the Leicestershire County Council Children in Care Council.

The 'Mayflower Environment Helpers', a group of year 6 students at Mayflower Primary School, have created native wildflower seed planting kits to be given out to fellow students to encourage the local community to 'plant for wildlife' at home. This is accompanied by an instructional planting video and artwork to promote the project. Green Influencers at Rushey Mead Academy Secondary School are eagerly developing ideas to transform an area of underused outdoor space into a school garden, which can be utilised for a variety of purposes including outdoor classroom activities; whilst pupils at Sandfield Close Primary School will be creating their environmental project during the upcoming autumn term.

Our mission is to help young people create deep, lasting and meaningful connections with the natural environment through sustainable youth social action. Green Influencers will learn and build skills and be empowered to develop and deliver exciting and impactful projects within their local area. The scheme is in place until January



Proudly supporting youth social action



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport



COMMUNITY
FUND



2023, and we are currently looking to identify youth groups and clubs who are available to start a project in early 2022. If you know of a group of young people who would like to get involved, contact Hannah Keys (Green Mentor) for information: hkeys@lrwt.org.uk.

 For more information on the Green Influencers Scheme, visit: lrwt.org.uk/green-influencers

The Green Influencers Scheme was set up by The Ernest Cook Trust and is match funded with the #iwill Fund, supported by The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department of Culture Media & Sport.

Give the gift of nature this Christmas

Treat your loved ones to a gift membership with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust this Christmas. Unlike some presents, it will keep giving all year round. Not only will you show someone special that you care, you will be supporting our vital work for wildlife across Leicestershire and Rutland.

Your friend or family member will receive a membership welcome pack, including a packed 110pp guide to our nature reserves and local wildlife, our *Wild Leicestershire and Rutland* magazine three times a year, exclusive access to member events, newsletters and much more.

 lrwt.org.uk/gift-membership



**Leicestershire
& Rutland**
Wildlife Trust

Please help us protect nature and wildlife across our region by giving a festive gift of membership today.