

# Wild

Leicestershire  
and Rutland

Membership magazine

Summer 2022



## THE VERGE OF SUCCESS

Can hundreds of our verges be highways for nature?

## CELEBRATING SUSTAINABILITY

How to make your lifestyle better for the planet

# TEAM WILDER

We're bringing wildlife back to Leicestershire and Rutland



**Leicestershire & Rutland**  
Wildlife Trust

# Welcome

Welcome to our summer edition of *Wild!* I'm sure you'll find lots to inspire and interest you inside.

After a challenging couple of years, it's wonderful to see our events programme back to full strength with walks, talks, family activities, courses, osprey cruises and more (see p32). We are grateful to our Local Groups for their longstanding commitment and determination to protect local wildlife. Supporting them to develop their reach into their communities is integral to our Team Wilder ambition (see p10).

Recruiting more people to champion nature in their everyday lives, in businesses, on their land and in schools is so important in helping us deliver our new Strategy to 2030: "Bringing Back Nature". We want to see our volunteer army expand and diversify, offering ways for people to give back in a way that suits them. With so many people benefiting from nature during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are confident that we can empower and encourage more people to get involved.

Most of all, we are so grateful for your support. There has never been a more important time to be an active Wildlife Trust member. We all know we are facing an environmental and climate crisis of epic proportions, right on our doorsteps. Our members are our lifeline, ensuring that we can work across our nature reserves and the wider landscape to deliver nature's recovery. It means we can work in partnership with farmers, landowners and local authorities, inspire children and young people, and carry out targeted species projects. We know we can and need to do more, and we will do so, with your help.

*Ann Tomlinson*

Chair



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## 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.

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

*Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust*

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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.

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://lrwt.org.uk/legacy)

**Businesses** Become a corporate supporter of LRWT and make wildlife part of your business  
[lrwt.org.uk/corporate](http://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](http://lrwt.org.uk/wildlife-watch)

**Local Groups** Be inspired by walks, talks, events and activities in your local area  
[lrwt.org.uk/local-groups](http://lrwt.org.uk/local-groups)

# LRWT NEWS

## Meet the friendly new face of The Wildlife Trusts

Following consultation with members and supporters from across The Wildlife Trusts movement, our branding has been updated. Whilst some elements will feel familiar, our logo has been restyled with a fresh, modern feel. We will be rolling out our new look gradually, making it as sustainable as possible. This means

using up any clothing and merchandise first, before replacing them with new stock. The cost for the update has been kept to a minimum, with all market research and design work undertaken in-house by Wildlife Trust staff. For over 100 years, Wildlife Trusts have been standing up for precious wildlife and wild places. How we look might have changed a little,

but our mission, to bring about land and seas rich in wildlife, remains the same.



## 30 Days Wild is back for 2022

Can you do one Random Act of Wildness every day for 30 days? Sign up and join thousands of others taking part in our annual nature challenge.

A Random Act of Wildness is any little thing that you can do that gets you to experience, learn about, or even help nature near you. They are quick and simple to do, but when added together can make a big difference for you and for wildlife. Research has shown that spending time in nature makes us happier and healthier; wildlife and wild

places help us to get active and improve our confidence and creativity. Nature can also improve our mental wellbeing, by helping us cope with stress, anxiety and depression.

When you sign up to take part, you will get a free postal or digital pack full of goodies to inspire your wild month, plus ideas to stay wild every day throughout June.

[lrwt.org.uk/30DaysWild](http://lrwt.org.uk/30DaysWild)



30 DAYS WILD © EVIE AND TOM PHOTOGRAPHY.

## New moss records in Launde Park Wood

Three new moss species were found recently in Launde Park Wood, all previously unrecorded in this location. The species are common on heathland and woodland in the uplands, and in Leicestershire and Rutland are almost completely restricted to the acidic soils of Charnwood Forest. They have now been found on the rotting stumps of western cedar trees, which were felled after LRWT took over the management of this ancient woodland. They have probably (if unexpectedly) appeared as the tiny spores of fungi can be carried over long distances by the wind. Waved silk-moss *Plagiothecium undulatum* (pictured), a conspicuous moss with long, worm-like branches, is one of the new species that has found an ideal habitat on the rotting conifer stumps.



PLAGIOTHECIUM UNdulatum © UTA HAMZAQOJI.

## 65th Anniversary Appeal raises £20,000

Thank you to everyone who supported our 65th Anniversary Appeal with a gift to our nature reserves. Thanks to your kind generosity, we have raised an amazing £20,000.

This vital funding will support the work we are doing across our nature reserves to help local wildlife thrive. Managing our reserves to keep them in the best possible condition for wildlife takes year-round work and investment. Our small conservation team, supported by hundreds of dedicated volunteers, work tirelessly to ensure that our local special landscapes remain a sanctuary for wildlife. However, finding funds to continue our work gets harder every year. In the last two years, the impacts of COVID-19 have caused delays to some of this work due to staff shortages, cancellation of volunteer activities and a loss of income.

The funds raised through this appeal will help us make up for lost time and enable us to continue to protect, enhance and restore our special wild places, now and for the future. Thank you for your support. We couldn't do it without you!



BARNOWL © JONHAWKINSURREYHILLSPHOTOGRAPHY.

## UK UPDATE

# The weird, wonderful & worrying

## OUR 2021 MARINE REVIEW

Wally the Walrus made a surprise visit to our shores in 2021



Cetaceans take centre stage in our round-up of marine news from the last 12 months, with success stories, tragic tales, and strange sightings.

There was hope for humpback whales, with strong numbers recorded around the southwest and further sightings in Scotland. One individual, named Pi, delighted whale watchers on the Isles of Scilly for over two months. The surge in sightings in recent years reflects populations recovering after bans on commercial whaling.

It wasn't all good news though, with large numbers of seals and cetaceans reported stranded across the UK, including a minke whale calf that tragically had to be put down after stranding in the Thames. In Cornwall alone, over 170 cetaceans and 247 seals were stranded, with a further 51 cetaceans recorded stranding in Devon. Many of these animals showed signs of injury from fishing gear or propellers, including a humpback whale off Looe Island that was caught in fishing lines. One of the stranded animals in Cornwall was a striped dolphin, which are common in the Mediterranean but seldom seen around the UK.

This wasn't the only surprising cetacean sighting in the south of the UK. Two orcas from the Hebrides made a scene-stealing appearance off the cliff-top Minack Theatre in Cornwall — the most southerly sighting of members of this group of killer whales in over 50 years — and white-beaked dolphins, usually found in subarctic waters, were seen in Essex for the first time since 2000.

Whales and dolphins weren't alone in

popping up in unexpected places. 2021 saw two walrus recorded in the UK, with one, nicknamed Wally, spending weeks in south Wales and then the Isles of Scilly; and a second (known as Freya) briefly visiting Northumberland before being spotted in Shetland. There was also a pufferfish found washed up on a Cornish beach, which is an oceanic species that rarely comes this far north.

These unusual sightings provide further evidence of the impacts of climate change on our seas. Temperature changes can cause disruption to feeding habits and breeding cycles, driving animals to move out of their usual range. Some species are shifting their distribution completely. The ringneck blenny, a small fish normally found in the Eastern Atlantic or Mediterranean, has become common in Cornwall's Fal estuary, with further signs of breeding in the English Channel.

Our marine life faces many threats in addition to climate change, including disturbance from recreational activities. Cornwall Wildlife Trust reported that disturbances of marine wildlife have tripled since 2014, with an increase of jet skis and motorboats a major cause for concern. Elsewhere, The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales witnessed a seal pup being abandoned after people got too close to it. Surveys by Dorset Wildlife Trust recorded damage to the seabed caused by the anchors of large cruise ships, moored off the coast due to the pandemic.

But there was also plenty to celebrate last year, with good news for kelp forests, seagrass meadows, oyster beds and many more habitats and species. In March, a

new byelaw was passed to stop damaging fishing practices off the Sussex coast. To speed up the area's recovery, the Sussex Kelp Restoration Project will restore a vast 200km<sup>2</sup> of kelp forest, providing feeding and nursery grounds for molluscs, shrimp, and cuttlefish.

Seagrass habitats also got a much needed boost. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust transplanted seeds and plants to areas where seagrass has previously flourished, whereas Manx Wildlife Trust discovered a new seagrass meadow, Cornwall Wildlife Trust mapped seagrass regrowth in areas where moorings had been removed, and Cumbria Wildlife Trust carried out the first surveys of seagrass on mudflats off Walney Island for over 20 years.

There are even more sea success stories in our full round-up, which you can read at: [wildlifetrusts.org/marine-review-21](http://wildlifetrusts.org/marine-review-21)

### Ocean oddities

- Adders took to the surf as snakes were seen paddling in the waves on Wembury Beach, Dorset and off the coast of Anglesey, North Wales.
- Devon Wildlife Trust reported a surge of compass jellyfish, believed to be caused by the July heatwave.
- Scottish Wildlife Trust rangers were wowed by a white puffin on Handa Island. The pale puffin lacks pigmentation in its feathers, due to a genetic condition called leucism.

## UK UPDATE

## Splatters matter

The latest results from the Bugs Matter Survey show that significantly fewer insects were recorded nationally in 2021 than 17 years ago. These results add to the growing evidence that insect populations are declining across the world, with potentially catastrophic consequences for wildlife, wild places, and people.

The Bugs Matter Survey, initially developed by the RSPB in 2004 is based on the 'windscreen phenomenon', originating from the observation that people find fewer insects squashed on the windscreens of their cars compared to several decades ago. The survey was revitalised and made more accessible in 2021, when Kent Wildlife Trust created the Bugs Matter App in partnership with Gwent, Somerset, and Essex Wildlife Trusts, and Buglife. The app makes it easy



for anyone with a smartphone or tablet to record the insects on their car, bringing meaningful citizen science to the pockets of thousands. Last year there were nearly 5,000 journeys logged, helping scientists monitor the alarming declines in our insects.

Find out more and get involved at [kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/bugs-matter](http://kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/bugs-matter)

## Failing farmland wildlife

This January, the Government announced new schemes to reward farmers in England for supporting nature's recovery. Farmland accounts for a huge proportion of our land use, so it's imperative that we have policies that support farmers to help nature. The latest announcement

includes a lot of the right rhetoric, but still lacks any clear details or urgency. The published documents failed to provide details on eligibility, the determination of priorities, or how Government will ensure these schemes achieve target outcomes. Read more at [wtru.st/farm-reform](http://wtru.st/farm-reform)

## Welcome to the team!

The Wildlife Trusts are delighted to announce that GP and TV presenter Dr Amir Khan, and naturalist, TV presenter and author Iolo Williams, have become vice presidents of the charity. We also warmly welcome award-winning TV presenter Maddie Moate, and The Vamps' lead guitarist, James McVey (pictured), as wildlife ambassadors. The nature enthusiasts will use their voices, influence and audiences to help The Wildlife Trusts shine a spotlight on the urgent need for nature's recovery in the UK. Meet our new vice presidents and ambassadors at [wtru.st/new-voices](http://wtru.st/new-voices)



## UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



### 1 Seabird power

The Scottish Wildlife Trust has joined forces with alternative rock band Sea Power to raise awareness of the urgent need to tackle the nature and climate crises. The Wildlife Trust worked with the band to create a new video for their classic track "The Great Skua," featuring footage of seabirds on Handa Island Wildlife Reserve.

[wtru.st/seapower](http://wtru.st/seapower)



### 2 A city sanctuary

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust welcomed plans for a new 'Green Heart' in Nottingham city centre, after putting forward a bold ambition to transform a derelict former shopping centre into wildlife-rich greenspace. The vision is billed as a blueprint for sustainable city centres in a post-COVID world.

[wtru.st/green-heart](http://wtru.st/green-heart)

### 3 Wild in Wales

Radnorshire Wildlife Trust has purchased a 164-acre farm in mid-Wales, with plans to transform it into a haven for wildlife. Initial steps to bring nature back to the former livestock farm will include scrub development, to provide shelter for wildlife. The Wildlife Trust will work with neighbours, local farmers and landowners to create more space for nature in the region.

[wtru.st/mid-wales-farm](http://wtru.st/mid-wales-farm)



Sophie Pavelle

@sophiepavs

## Seas of surprise

As I write, it's a moody, overcast Tuesday afternoon. Desk days like these make me crave the sea. I want to be fully in it, head and all, with (ideally) the sun streaking through. I'm lucky enough to have boomeranged home to Devon after university, and the southwest coast has lodged itself deep in my heart. I think of the sea daily, envisaging myself on, in or indeed under it... if possible.

One of my favourite things about British coastlines is that they are never the same. The rhythm of the tide brings new sights, smells, colours and characters to our shorelines four times a day. Give me a spare spring hour and you may find me walking barefoot along the local beach, looking for snakelocks anemones at low tide. Aside from their striking green and purple colour, I love how it takes barely any water for them to sway their thick tentacles like hula skirts, dancing in their rockpools like a couple of TikTokers.

On this same beach, a colony of breeding kittiwakes nest on the sandstone cliff face, coming home after a challenging winter in the Atlantic. As one of our most endangered seabirds, seeing them so free as they wheel with abandon about the clifftops, diving for food to feed their growing chicks, is a sight to raise even the gloomiest spirits.

But for me, nothing quite compares to the sighting of a fellow mammal in the water. Last summer, I had a particularly memorable encounter with a grey seal—the larger of our two native species. I was paddleboarding on a calm April afternoon, when the water had this glassy appeal. Paddling in random

circles and enjoying the rare absence of swell on this particular stretch of coast, I adopted a downwards gaze, unsure what I was really looking for. But then, there he was. About 10 feet away from me — an enormous bull grey seal. He was bottling as seals do, with only his (gigantic!) head above the water. Whiskers twitching, eyes watching. I stopped breathing, just in case. And then as quickly as he had surfaced, he disappeared below the waves. Off on some covert assignment, no doubt.

Rather incredibly, the UK is home to 40 per cent of the world population of grey seals. Perhaps they enjoy the variety of the coast as much as I do? I think of that moment often and look forward to being surprised yet again by the beauty of the British seas this spring.

**Sea Dragon**  
Don't forget to read about our amazing ancient discovery  
[lrwt.org.uk/sea-dragon](http://lrwt.org.uk/sea-dragon)

Find inspiration to get outdoors and discover wildlife this summer with our selection of seasonal spectacles!

[wildlifetrusts.org/summer-wildlife](http://wildlifetrusts.org/summer-wildlife)

### OCEAN UPDATES

Discover more about our seas by signing up for our marine mailing! You'll get an exclusive monthly newsletter packed with marine conservation news from around the world, exciting wildlife sightings from our amazing UK seas, and updates on the latest developments in protecting our oceans. [wildlifetrusts.org/marine-mailing](http://wildlifetrusts.org/marine-mailing)

**Sophie Pavelle** is a science communicator and Ambassador for The Wildlife Trusts. Her first book *Forget Me Not, Finding the Forgotten Species of Climate Change Britain* is published 9 June 2022 (Bloomsbury)



## News from Team Wilder

How we've been inspired by our members, volunteers and supporters.

### Inspired by nature

We were sent this beautiful, handwritten poem by LRWT member Mr Keith Collins, alongside a kind donation. We love seeing how nature has inspired you, through letters, art, poetry, literature, film and photography, or even just commenting on our social media, so please do share your creativity with us. We can't publish everything, but you will always receive at least our heartfelt thanks.

### Break Still the Day

By K. G. Collins

Alone to watch the dragonfly  
Spread its wings on the air  
Show silver through, take change in blue  
Brief stay cannot impair  
By waters calm, tread summer lake  
Hedge meadows skip between  
Then into light that shadows break  
Slow drift on wayward stream  
No silent rest by willows call



You touch and then are gone  
With breeze next glide where woods collide  
And dance without a song  
Slow rolls the mist as darkness trades  
Your tricks of flight are run  
Soon dawn will show its folded glow  
More journeys to be done

Get in touch [info@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:info@lrwt.org.uk)

### There and back again: from the Andes to Leicestershire

LRWT member and volunteer Michael Webster has published his first book: *The Condor's Feather* (September Publishing, 2022), which has been described by author James Lowen as 'a thrilling, deeply emotional and authentic bird-lover's travelogue'. Michael is a keen volunteer for wildlife conservation, and LRWT members may know him and his wife, Paula, from their talks given to Local Groups or as founder members of the Charnwood Group. They recently returned from five years in South America, following and filming birds, and making wildlife documentaries for conservation agencies. They travelled the length of the Andes, from penguins in Patagonia, up beyond the hummingbirds of the equator, to the flamingos of the Caribbean. Their stories and adventures are being told for the first time in this beautiful travelogue, available to purchase in Waterstones for £14.99. Congratulations to Michael and Paula!



### Brockleby's Pie Making Workshops – 25% discount for LRWT members

Our wonderful partners at Brockleby's Pies are offering 25% off Pie Making Experiences on the 19th and 26th July for LRWT members only. The workshops involve a talk on the history of Brockleby's and the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie, a bakery tour, and you will make your very own Melton Mowbray Pork Pie. You can take home your creation on the day or have it chilled until you are ready to collect.

With the discount, the cost will reduce from £50 per couple to £37.50, or from £30 for an individual to £22.50.

Find out more on our Members Hub and book your place.

[lrwt.org.uk/members](http://lrwt.org.uk/members)

**#TeamWilder**  
Tell us what you've been doing for wildlife on social media or get in touch with our team.

# Team Wilder



## How we can all be part of a brighter future for nature

If we are to aid nature's recovery, we're going to need you, your family, friends and local communities at the heart of 'Team Wilder'.

By Jamie Perry,  
Head of Engagement

**I** am honoured to be leading Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust's engagement activities at such a pivotal time for nature. Since joining in February 2021 I have been struck by the rich, pioneering history of our Trust and of the 45 others just like us across the UK.

Seventy years ago, the very first Sites of Special Scientific Interest were registered in Leicestershire by The Nature Conservancy Council. Five years later in 1956, our Trust was born and what an incredible journey it has taken. The initial steps were led by a small number of visionary people with the tenacity to take action and protect what was most dear to them. Initially, their pioneering work was slow, and things just didn't seem to go

their way, but with perseverance in 1961 our first reserves were secured.

With these reserves came volunteers, ranging from college students to retired helpers. Through hard work, trial and error, study and experience, our expertise and influence grew and with it the reserves expanded in number along with more passionate supporters.

Fast forward to today and our achievements, enabled by our valued support, are astounding. We now have over 35 reserves across Leicestershire and Rutland providing refuge for endangered species, an army of committed members, volunteers and supporters, and a sophisticated network of partnerships with businesses, landowners, conservation charities and councils. But the negative impact on nature has accelerated sharply and as a Trust we now have to rise to meet this challenge. →



BACKGROUND BY LORETTA-ROSA ON UNSPLASH, GRASSLAND SURVEYS © JANINA HOLUBECKI, © LRWT.



Volunteering is good for you and great for wildlife.

**Nature: a state of emergency**

We should all be fiercely proud of these achievements and the hope they provide. After all, as a valued member you continue to make a huge difference for nature. However, we must recognise that wildlife and habitats across the wider countryside in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are now in a critical state of emergency. We no longer need to look to the dodo as an example of an extinct species on far away shores, because so many are under immediate threat right on our doorsteps.

We are at a turning point for people and wildlife. We need to reconnect more people with nature and inspire them to take action to reverse the decline and degradation we are seeing in our environment. Extreme weather events, like floods and droughts, are becoming annual occurrences, something very personal to me having lost my house to a tornado in Birmingham some years ago.

The general population has become disconnected from greenspaces, which is impacting their mental health. Our soils are damaged and will struggle to meet the demands of feeding the nation while pesticides and habitat loss ravage local biodiversity despite many farmers' positive efforts.

Research from the *State of Nature Reports* (2019, 2016) found that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Of the 8,000 species assessed, over half have declined over recent decades and 15% were threatened with extinction from the UK. Of the 218 countries that were examined, the UK was ranked 189th.

In short, the collective effects of over-consumption, pollution, intensive farming, pesticides, development and a widespread disconnection with the value and wonder of the natural world have ravaged habitats and species not just across the UK but also across our two counties. We have no option but to amplify our ambitions and impact.



**It's not too late**

All is not lost. We have never been more resolved to aid nature's recovery with your continued support. There is an opportunity now to tip the balance in nature's favour, but that window is closing fast. That's why we need your help more than ever. Part of our mission will be to protect 30% of land in our region for nature but for now I would like to talk about collective action.

Research in social science has shown that for an idea to take hold with the majority of the population, we still need a quarter of people on board. If just one in four individuals support our cause, taking visible, meaningful actions and adopting ideas in their own lives, that is enough to tip the balance and normalise a behaviour. This can be something that seems small – like letting your lawn grow long, feeding the birds or making a space in your garden fence for hedgehogs – but if just one in four of us make that change, the majority will follow.

To give you the scale of this ambition, we estimate our two counties will be home to over 1 million people by 2030, meaning that to achieve our mission we need to inspire 250,000 people to take regular action for nature. We believe everyone has a central role to play in this recovery as part of 'Team Wilder', with participation just one action away.



Inspiring the next generation remains integral to our work.

**Creating Team Wilder**

At the core of our ambitions is a principle that has been the cornerstone of our history: our loyal and longstanding Local Groups. For decades these groups have been at the heart of our community, working tirelessly and inspiring people at their events, taking local action, volunteering to protect and manage vital habitats and raising funds to support the Trust. I was humbled to work out that in one recent meeting, they represented over 481 years of conservation and community engagement expertise.

This legacy of grassroots local community action is what we will empower over the coming years, better supporting our Local Groups and helping them inspire others. We will also encourage smaller groups to come together and reach out to their friends, family and neighbours. Advances in digital connectivity will play an important role in reaching new supporters.

We will look to broaden opportunities for our volunteers, facilitate engagement with parish councils, develop our impact with schools, and support new networks of wildlife ambassadors. We want to enable community support that activates people across our counties, street by street and house by house. We hope

to see Wildlife Gardening Volunteers, Local Fundraisers, Street and parish Wildlife Ambassadors, Social Influencers, Youth Action Groups and Community Champions providing a catalyst for change, at scale that we support but (importantly) don't wholly own.

As we move forward, we want to reassure our members that whilst we are part of a national movement, our actions and focus are based on the labours and principles of our rich past in our local area.

We know that there are individuals out there taking meaningful action for nature on their own or in their communities every day. You just have to read our 'My Wild Life' feature in every issue of *Wild Leicestershire and Rutland* to be inspired by the community groups and families who are putting nature at the heart of their lives (see pp26-27). We would love to hear more about what you're doing, on your street, in your community or in your village, or if you want to start your own project; you can get in touch for advice and ideas. We also want to work more with companies across our two counties who can make nature their business by engaging their employees.

We know we can do all this and more - with your continued support. 🐛

**Be part of Team Wilder!**

**On your own**  
Take action in your own life by reducing your impact (p18) or taking positive steps for nature.

**In your community**  
Become a local leader and wildlife champion by starting a community project for nature.

**On your farm or land**  
Support nature on your farm or private land with our help.

**At school**  
Connect children of all ages to nature and empower them to help wildlife.

**At work**  
Make nature your business by teaming up with us to support local wildlife.

**Support us**  
Support appeals, leave a gift in your Will, donate or give the gift of membership.

Find out more at [lrwt.org.uk/teamwilder](http://lrwt.org.uk/teamwilder)

**#TeamWilder**  
Tell us what action you're already taking, at home, in your community, at work or at school using #TeamWilder on social media.

**Local Groups**  
Get involved with Local Groups near you  
[lrwt.org.uk/localgroups](http://lrwt.org.uk/localgroups)



VOLUNTEERS © LRWT, THE TIME IS NOW LOBBY, LONDON © LRWT.

VOLUNTEERS AT RWNR © JOE DAVIS.

# 6 places to dance with damselflies and dragons



WILLOW EMERALD DAMSELFLY © SANDER MEERTJINS PHOTOGRAPHY

**T**his summer, enter a prehistoric world of predatory dragons, elegant damsels, aerial battles, territories and beauty - not through a computer game or Netflix series, but by getting up close to Odonata. Dragonflies and damselflies are on the wing from spring until late autumn, offering an astonishing variation in their size and colour. These adaptable insects lord over ponds, wetlands, moorland and woodland glades, feeding on flies, midges and even each other. They duck and dive as they pounce on prey, or dodge to avoid the talons of a hungry hobby. Even their names evoke ancient history, stateliness blended with agility, prowess and weaponry: emperors, darters, hawkers, skimmers and clubtails. These fascinating creatures are among the fastest and oldest insects in the world. Fossils of very large dragonfly ancestors, like the meganeura, survive from 300 million years ago, with wingspans up to 75cm. Whilst modern day species may not be quite so large, you can still enjoy watching these formidable creatures.

## Discover dragonflies and damselflies for yourself



- 1 Glen Moss, Scottish Wildlife Trust**  
 There are nine breeding species of dragonfly and damselfly here, and the golden-ringed dragonfly is an occasional visitor. Look for pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies too.  
**Where:** Kilmacolm, PA13 4PF
- 2 Falstone Moss, Northumberland Wildlife Trust**  
 An upland bog explored via boardwalk, the central pool has golden-ringed dragonfly, common hawk, black and common darter, and large red, azure and emerald damselfly.  
**Where:** Kielder Dam, NE48 1BE
- 3 Pentrosfa Mire, Radnorshire Wildlife Trust**  
 This reserve supports species including azure and large red damselflies, common, brown and southern hawk, keeled skimmer, broad-bodied chaser and common darter.  
**Where:** Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5NT
- 4 Kelham Bridge, LRWT**  
 Sixteen dragonfly species have been recorded. Look for migrant and southern hawk, black-tailed skimmer, ruddy darter, banded demoiselle and emerald damselfly among others.  
**Where:** Ravenstone, LE67 2AN
- 5 Upton Broads and Marshes, Norfolk Wildlife Trust**  
 Awash with dragonfly and damselfly species, including the unusual variable damselfly, blue damselfly, hairy dragonfly and the unique Norfolk hawk.  
**Where:** South Walsham, NR13 6EQ
- 6 Upton Heath, Dorset Wildlife Trust**  
 Rare mire habitat with 25 recorded species, at least fourteen of them breeding. Look out for downy emerald and heathland specialists such as small red damselfly and black darter.  
**Where:** Broadstone, BH21 3RX

*New arrival*  
 Willow emerald first appeared in Leicestershire and Rutland in 2019 and is quickly spreading - look for its distinctive oviposition scars on branches overhanging water.

## Awesome Odonata

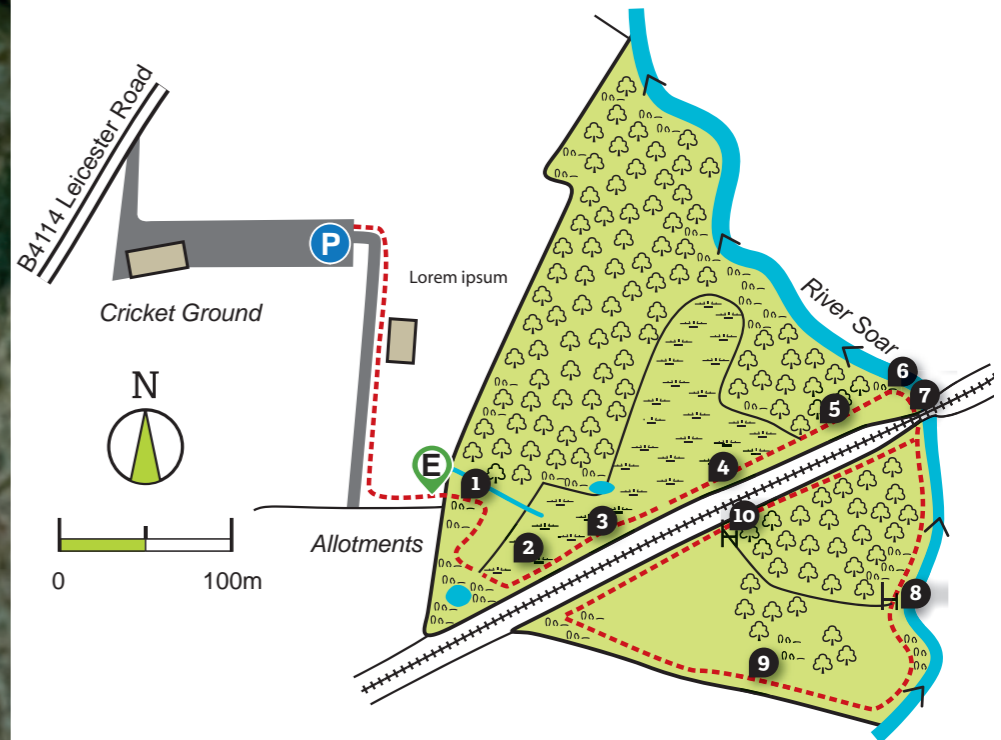
Wildlife Trusts across the UK run guided walks and events to explore dragonflies and damselflies. Search for your nearest at [wildlifetrusts.org/events](http://wildlifetrusts.org/events)





# Take a summer stroll around Narborough Bog

The woodland entrance to Narborough Bog is excellent for great spotted woodpecker and nuthatch.

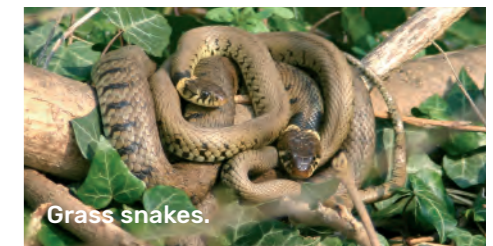


to feed. They sit on branches overhanging the river, waiting for the right moment to plunge into the water.

Ignore the path to the right and continue to walk along the river. The jewel in the crown for any riverside walk would be an otter sighting. They are present here and their spraints are sometimes found, but they are seldom seen. Walking very quietly in the early morning or late evening affords you the best chance of spotting one.

Cross the stile into the meadows **8**, which are managed sensitively with light grazing (you might see our cattle during your visit). Grazing stops rank vegetation dominating and allows the varied wildflowers to thrive. Some rare plants found here include meadow rue, meadow saxifrage and marsh thistle. In the centre, we are allowing an area of scrub to develop **9** around the alder trees. Listen for the scratchy song of common whitethroat as they belt it out from a convenient perch. Wrens, dunnocks and other birds nest here, and the brambles attract hosts of butterflies and other insects. Continue through the

meadows and then take the stile back along the path that follows the trainline **10**. Common and ruddy darters use the fenceposts to bask in the sun. Return to the riverside and then retrace your steps back to the reserve entrance.



Grass snakes.

The entrance to Narborough Bog is nestled in the corner of some football pitches and an allotment – a relatively unassuming place. As soon as you enter the reserve however, your whole opinion of the site will transform. Let Conservation Officer Andy Neilson take you on a stroll this summer.

Owned by LRWT since 1975, this Site of Special Scientific Interest is a rich mosaic of woodland, wetland and grassland habitats alongside the upper reaches of the River Soar, and is home to the largest peat deposit in Leicestershire.

Starting at the reserve entrance **1**, you can see a mixed deciduous woodland to your left, dominated by willow, alder and oak. This is a great spot to look and listen for woodland birds, including hearing the “check-check” of great spotted woodpecker or the “bli-blip” of nuthatch.

Follow the path to the right bordering the allotments, and you will soon reach the railway embankment. Turn left. This raised area **2** gives a vantage point



Narborough Bog. Unassuming, but brimming with life.



to overlook the reedbed. Look left to appreciate the sprawling beauty of the large crack willow close to the path. This fast-growing species can grow so quickly that it cracks and collapses under its own weight. Surprisingly, this doesn't kill the tree, but helps create nooks, crevices and areas of dead wood to support other species like fungi and nesting birds.

Continue down the small bank and along the reedbed **3**. You can listen to the “whispering” of reeds in the wind, also known as susurration. Walking along quietly on sunny mornings might reward you with a sighting of a grass snake. These wetland-loving reptiles are often seen at Narborough Bog, basking in sunny spots or swimming in the river,

hunting for amphibians and small fish. Listen for the scratchy tunes of sedge and reed warblers emanating from the bushes within the reedbed **4**. There is an unusual variety of guelder rose here, too, with yellow berries rather than red.

Leave the reedbed behind and continue alongside the embankment **5**. The woodland is wetter here, with species like alder and willow more prevalent. Listen for the tuneful melodies of blackcap and willow warbler. Upon reaching the river **6**, look for the brilliant blue of banded demoiselles. This large damselfly loves slow moving rivers with plentiful bankside vegetation. Males have a bright blue abdomen and thorax, with a dark band across the wings.

At the fork turn right under the railway bridge **7**. You are very close to the river and stand your best chance of hearing a high-pitched “piiiip piiiip piiiip”, before a flash of brilliant blue streaks past. Kingfishers can be seen all year round here but are particularly active in the summer when they have hungry chicks



Marsh marigold.

## Fact file

The reserve lies between the River Soar and the M1 motorway, 8km south of Leicester. From the city, head south past Fosse Park shopping centre on the B4114. Turn left immediately before going under the motorway bridge, down the track to the sports club. The reserve entrance is just where the allotments and the nature reserve meet. There is a kissing gate and stiles.

Nearest postcode: LE19 2AZ

Parking: Park near the club-house and walk across the recreation ground to the reserve entrance.

Size: 9ha

For further information, please see our Nature Reserves Guide or [lrwt.org.uk](http://lrwt.org.uk)

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

# Celebrating Sustainability



Everyone can make changes in their lifestyles to help nature recover.

Every day we make choices that directly affect the environment and the natural world. From what we do, to what we eat and the clothes we wear, Communications & Engagement Assistant, Jordan Linthwaite shares the small and simple changes we can all make to reduce our environmental footprint and to leave more room for nature.

There's a common misconception that living a low-impact life requires you to be a vegan, off-grid homesteader. In reality, there are no ground rules; the lifestyle is created with every mindful change we make, whether that's composting food waste, switching to green energy or buying second-hand clothing. Here are some ideas to get your started.

**Use what you already own**  
Many people believe that living sustainably requires purchasing new "reusable" products. However, it's much more sustainable to reuse what you already own. There are lots of brands selling sustainable products like deodorant, toothpaste, kitchenware and so on; whilst it is great to opt for these



in the long run, don't throw away the stockpile of products you already own. Only buy new when you need to. Don't be pressured into buying products made from bamboo or glass; you may already own the same product in metal or plastic, which are also reusable materials.



### Shop Local

This simple action supports both the environment and your community. Transporting products around the world takes an enormous amount of resources and energy. Global shipping traffic is a significant cause of climate change due to overconsumption, greenhouse gasses and poor fuel efficiency. So next time you're ready to place an online order or head to a superstore, do a quick internet search for a local business alternative.

### Become a conscious consumer

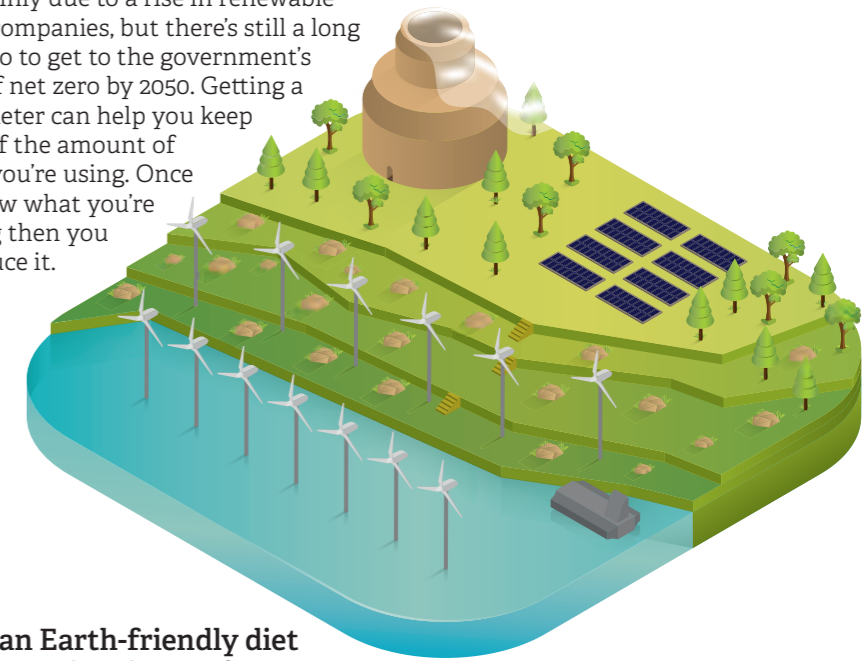
Many big brands have recently latched onto the eco-friendly trend, but not in a beneficial way. Words like "green",

"organic" and "sustainable" have been making their way onto everything from toothbrushes to t-shirts. This is called greenwashing and sadly, it's mostly a marketing trick with no actual environmental benefits. While there are currently no legal limits placed on using these false labels, the best way to combat this is to start shopping where you trust. Do your research before you make a purchase and where you can, shop secondhand or through an online marketplace.



### Use green energy

Switching to a green energy provider is a great way to stop wasting energy. Today the UK has 42% lower emissions than in 1990, mainly due to a rise in renewable energy companies, but there's still a long way to go to get to the government's target of net zero by 2050. Getting a smart meter can help you keep on top of the amount of energy you're using. Once you know what you're emitting then you can reduce it.



### Adopt an Earth-friendly diet

Whilst we work with many farmers productively across our two counties, meat production globally has been proven to have a major negative impact on the environment. At scale, intensive meat production can be responsible for pollution, significant water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and habitat destruction. Becoming vegan or vegetarian isn't sustainable for many people, however, adopting a balanced 'flexitarian' diet can be beneficial to your health and the environment. Next time you cook a meal why not replace your meat-based protein with a vegetarian option that has less of a proven impact on the environment. By reducing our individual meat consumption, we can reduce our environmental footprints by as much as 30%.



Small and simple changes can have a lasting effect on the environment if we all contribute. Find out more useful tips on how to switch to a low-impact lifestyle [lrwt.org.uk/sustainable-living](http://lrwt.org.uk/sustainable-living)



# On the verge of recovery

Roadside verges can be highways for nature when properly managed, creating wildlife corridors across the country. Wildlife-friendly verge expert Mark Schofield shares the national picture, whilst we also look at what's happening closer to home in Leicestershire and Rutland.

**R**oad verges make up 1.2% of the UK, some 2,600km<sup>2</sup> — that's an area the size of Dorset. This county-sized tract of land, hidden in plain sight, is home to over 700 species of wildflowers, representing 45% of our native flora. In many cases, verges act as vital corridors for wildlife and can often be the last stand locally for scarce or declining wildflowers, such as sulphur clover, spiked rampion, Deptford pink, and perennial flax.

The safety of road users demands that verges are maintained with shorter turf on approach to bends and junctions and with safe pull-over zones. However, beyond these requirements there are huge opportunities to create more space

for nature. Huge opportunities that are all too often missed.

## Balancing act

Many verges are mown too frequently, and the cuttings left in place, which first creates a physical barrier to growth, then increases the soil fertility as the cuttings decompose. This gives an unnatural advantage to the most competitive plants. Spoil from ditch clearance is often spread across verges with similar effect.

Conversely, too little mowing can also be a problem; many verges are left unmown, and the strips of grassland are lost as they grow into scrub. Scrub is great for wildlife, but a mix of habitats which include scrub and wildflower areas is far better.

A road verge that is well managed for wildlife can be a set of parallel worlds each offering different niches for wildlife. Tall, wide, diverse, native hedgerows at the back of the verge, complete with trees, can grade through infrequently trimmed tall herbs and tussocks to grassland meadows mown once or twice a year, where the cuttings are collected and removed. Here mowing is best done in late summer, to allow seed to ripen and insect lifecycles to complete, or even later where soil is poorer.

Removing cuttings simulates wild grazing and reduces fertility in the soil, maintaining more natural conditions that support a wider diversity of wildflowers and the invertebrates that rely on them. Open drainage ditches can add habitat for

aquatic and marginal plants too, but spoil should be disposed of away from the verge where possible.

## Surprising diversity

One project happening across Leicestershire aims to survey and improve the quality of verges across the county. The Leicestershire Urban Verge Wildlife Project represents a partnership between Leicestershire County Council, NatureSpot ([naturespot.org.uk](http://naturespot.org.uk)), parish councils and local communities. The aim is to survey urban verges for wildlife, reviewing and changing the management to help improve their wildlife value. →



Even ordinary verges can be surprisingly diverse.

The scheme launched in 2020 as a pilot project, however due to its success and a vast increase in uptake, 2021 saw the highest number of parishes participating. Over 54 verges have been surveyed across 41 different parishes, totalling over 14,000 square metres of roadside verge. Fifteen more parishes are joining the project this year.

Roseanna Burton is the Environmental Partnerships Officer at Leicestershire County Council. "Annual surveys undertaken by NatureSpot have shown that even ordinary verges can hold a surprising diversity of wildflowers and grasses," she explained. "Allowing these plants to fully grow by not mowing during the summer months is most helpful to wildlife. Not only are the plants allowed to flower and produce nectar, but the taller vegetation also provides vital food, shelter and breeding habitat for many wildlife species."

Wildlife data from 54 Leicestershire verges has been collected by eighteen NatureSpot volunteers. A staggering 339 different species were identified from nearly 2,000 records, including 172 wildflower species and 30 grasses.

"A simple cessation in cuts between April-August on the designated verges will give species the opportunity to fully establish and thrive. Cuttings are

removed to help reduce the soil nutrients. Whilst some parishes would like to sow native wildflower seed, many of the verges already support a good wildflower diversity and are best managed by annual mowing."

**Rutland road verges**

Across the border in Rutland, the Rutland Natural History Society (RNHS) has historically led the charge to protect local road verges, working with LRWT and Rutland County Council amongst other partners. In the 1990s, several verges were designated as worthy of regular monitoring and protection, but whilst a few Rutland verges have been surveyed very regularly for many years, recently regular and systematic recording has been hindered.

Encouragingly, Rutland County Council have additionally recognised many verges suitable for protection. Linda Biddle, Chair of RNHS explained that "these verges were marked using short posts, which you may have seen around the local countryside. Many efforts were made to persuade the Council to adopt a sympathetic mowing regime,

and recently they have been trying to follow the Plantlife guidelines, but this has proved difficult to implement when the mowing is done by contractors and subcontractors. The marker posts are also very vulnerable to damage by machinery."

However, there are reasons for hope. In 2020, the Ketton-Empingham road was diverted to enable expansion of the quarry, and the unseeded verges of the new road were being naturally populated. Linda explains that "a number of RNHS members, led by local Botany Recorder Geoffrey Hall, found 89 species, including relatively rare plants like dwarf spurge and night-flowering catchfly, which are both listed as 'vulnerable'. Other uncommon plants included hare's-foot clover, bugloss and nodding thistle. We plan to monitor the verge in coming years and hope that Rutland County Council will ensure that these verges are left alone."

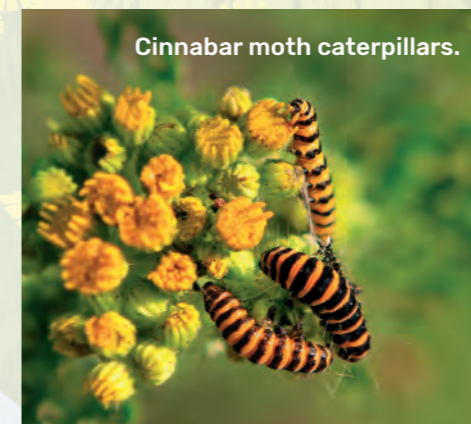
**Your voice matters**

Across the UK, verges may be crew-cut strips that flank suburban crescents and cul-de-sacs, or they might be overgrown rural lane sides. Your local highways authority (typically your county council

**"Annual surveys undertaken by NatureSpot have shown that even ordinary verges can hold a surprising diversity of wildflowers and grasses"**

or unitary authority) will have these managed under contract. A local petition may be able to reduce the frequency of cuts in your area, delivering cost savings and lowering the carbon footprint for public services. Cutting and collecting the cuttings is the main challenge cited by authorities, but affordable machinery exists to achieve this; and it has been implemented with success by some councils.

There are roadside nature reserves across the UK that set the standard for roadside habitat, but we must call for better management of the rest of our verges if we want to achieve a national Nature Recovery Network.



Cinnabar moth caterpillars.



Pollinators love wildflower-rich verges.



Common whitethroat.

For advice on where to start, visit [wildlifetrusts.org/verges](http://wildlifetrusts.org/verges)

**Get involved...  
...in Leicestershire**

Local parishes and communities who would like to register their interest for 2023 or find out more about the wildlife verge scheme are asked to contact Leicestershire County Council's environment team by emailing [environmentteam@leics.gov.uk](mailto:environmentteam@leics.gov.uk).

**...in Rutland**

RNHS is encouraging local communities to adopt a protected verge, by recording species throughout the flowering season. Assistance can be given with identification. You can also note any damage to local verges, so look for the protected verge signs and keep an eye on them. Get in touch at [rnhs.org.uk](http://rnhs.org.uk).

UK NEWS

# Spring Wildlife Gardening

Our gardens come alive in spring. Ponds fill with mating amphibians, borders buzz with the season's first bees, and everywhere else, from trees and hedges to fences and roof panels, birds are busy singing to defend territories, mating or feeding young. It's an exciting time of year.

While all of this goes on around us, there are things we can do to make our gardens even better for wildlife. First, take a look at your borders — in early spring they should be carpeted with flowers such as spring-flowering hellebores,

lungwort, primroses and other primulas, and bulbs like crocus and snake's-head fritillary. Later grape hyacinths, alliums, cranesbills, bugle and cuckooflower take centre stage. The early flowers are the most important as they provide food for pollinators emerging from hibernation — remember that daffodils and tulips are usually ignored

by bees. Make a note of which flowers you have, and fill gaps with pollinator favourites.

Ponds are full of mating amphibians and invertebrates, so are best left alone now. However, it's important to check that wildlife can enter and exit your pond safely — add a log or large stone to help wildlife access the water safely. If you don't have many plants in the pond you can add more now, as long as you don't disturb the water too much. Aim for a mix of floating, submerged and deep-water plants, with around two-thirds of the surface of the pond covered. Plants absorb nitrates from the water and therefore inhibit the growth of algae. They also provide hiding places for tadpoles and other larvae from

predators such as diving beetles and dragonfly nymphs. Choose native marginals such as brooklime and water forget-me-not, floating plants such as frogbit, and oxygenators like hornwort and water crowfoot.

Around the pond, think ahead to summer, when froglets and toadlets may be exiting the water for the first time. Let the grass there grow long and grow plants to protect them from predators. Cranesbill geraniums and birds' foot trefoil work well around ponds, providing plenty of shelter for amphibians big and small.

If you have a meadow then cut it back in early spring and remove clippings, then let it grow until autumn. As well as providing wildflowers for pollinators, the long grass will provide foodplants for caterpillars and

shelter for beetles and other invertebrates, plus amphibians, small mammals and even hedgehogs.

Get more wildlife-friendly gardening tips at [wildlifetrusts.org/gardening](https://www.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 BY HANNAH BAILEY, PHOTO © SARAH CUTTLE.



# MY WILD LIFE



Lottie Evans and her family have been shaped by nature conservation.

## “An extraordinary archive of knowledge”

Lottie, 23, St Andrews and Hugh (1934 - 2021), Rothley

**W**e are celebrating people in Leicestershire, Rutland and beyond who are making a difference for wildlife. Lucy McRobert chats to Lottie Evans, granddaughter of Hugh Dixon (1934 - 2021), Vice President of LRWT and stalwart of local nature conservation, about her grandfather's legacy.

**You are Hugh Dixon's granddaughter: that's quite a legacy to live up to! Did he inspire your love of nature?**

Definitely - in a subtle but profound Poppa way! He would have his binoculars on him for every walk and if you asked him to identify a plant or animal, he'd never let you down. His mind was an extraordinary archive of knowledge. I think Poppa's

compassion for nature fostered in all of us a love of the natural world. I follow in the footsteps of my relatives in studying the environment. My Uncle Charles works on sustainable tropical agriculture in Costa Rica, Aunt Helen ran the Rutland Osprey Project, and I marched for climate justice in Glasgow during COP26. As my aunt reflected, "the interest in conservation runs



Opening a hide at Rutland Water Nature Reserve.

very strongly in our genes" and I think the credit must go to Poppa.

Growing up in London, our trips to the Leicestershire countryside to visit our grandparents were filled with nature. I have many fond memories of the family adventures we had, all with Poppa's binos in tow, like picnics at Charnwood Lodge, scrambling around the volcanic rock, and an exciting boat trip on Rutland Water. I remember using Poppa's binoculars to spot birds in the reeds at RSPB Minsmere, and I still treasure the memory of seeing the starling murmuration over the marshes at Walberswick.

**What do you think were some of his best achievements?**

I didn't realise how much Poppa did for LRWT until he passed away, testament to his modesty and humility. His involvement

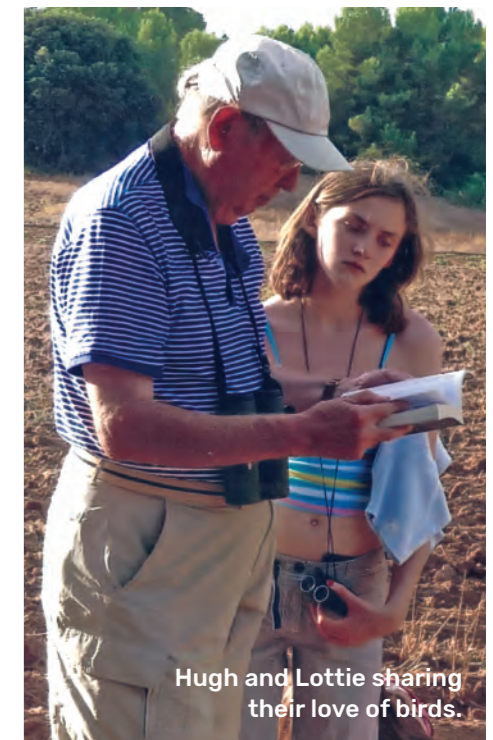
goes back almost to its inception; he held formal roles for over 30 years, ranging from Treasurer to Chairman, ensuring the financial stability and success of the Trust and securing key areas of land. His dedication was recognised by the community and in several accolades, including awards presented by the High Sheriff of Leicestershire and being introduced to Prince Philip! Poppa was instrumental in securing the nature reserve within Rutland Water. Professor Chris Smout, his dear friend and fellow birdwatcher, recalls that "when it became clear that there would be a reservoir there, it was Hugh above all who negotiated with those responsible about the construction. Eventually, through all this good planning Rutland Water became a major attraction to birdlife and to birdwatchers."

**What are you doing now?**

I am in my final undergraduate year studying Geography and Social Anthropology at St Andrews, a town that attracted Poppa for his secondary passion: golfing! I have enjoyed learning about issues from climate change and colonialism to migration and development, exploring the human-nature connections and tensions that we face in the Anthropocene. I worked with another student to create TESA, a Training in Environmental Sustainability Action module that all St Andrews students now complete. I'm not sure where I'll end up, but whether I'm working in education, environmental policy, or the charity sector, I hope to be treasuring the earth, and everything in it.

**What changes do you think Hugh would like to see for nature in the future?**

Having devoted so much to conservation in Leicestershire, one of his dearest wishes would be to see the Trust flourishing. It would make him very proud to see it grow in membership and for local conservation



Hugh and Lottie sharing their love of birds.

**“the interest in conservation runs very strongly in our genes”**

areas to be consolidated and expanded. He believed in a joined-up approach to landscape conservation, and he'd be excited by some of the newer attitudes to conservation, such as the growing acceptance for rewilding. I'm not sure what he would think of me marching on the streets for nature, but he'd agree with my motivation. Most of all, I'm sure Poppa would like to see greater levels of respect for nature and an understanding of its intrinsic value. Oh, and more birds overhead - especially swallows, which were his favourite.

**What is the most meaningful action your generation can take for nature?**

While action is needed at every scale, individual lifestyle choices - from food, to fashion, to flights - do matter, since they are cumulatively powerful and can shift cultures towards a more sustainable future. We need to foster a greater love of nature, by spending more time in it and caring for it. Nature gives back, with huge benefits to personal wellbeing and mental health, something people my age need now more than ever. I am hopeful that my generation can be the climate-conscious leaders of tomorrow!



Hugh was recognised nationwide for his contribution to conservation.

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!



# Birdfair:

a global conservation legacy

Our team of committed volunteers returned year on year to make the Birdfair fly.

**We all have our own memories of Birdfair, originally called the British Birdwatching Fair. Here are a few highlights, with thanks to everyone, particularly all the LRWT members and volunteers who made Birdfair so special.**

*By Sylvia Sullivan*

How to compress a journey encompassing more than 30 years of endeavour, achievement, generosity and passion into a few words, when whole books could be filled with stories that have become part of birding folklore? How to pay tribute to the thousands of people who have made the Birdfair a true festival and celebration of birdwatching and wildlife conservation?

**In the beginning...**

It is now almost legendary that Birdfair started off in a pub, a great idea growing from a pint or two, consumed by Tim Appleton (LRWT) and Martin Davies (RSPB) at the Finch's Arms. Both Tim and Martin were (and still are) passionate birders, naturalists and wildlife conservationists, driven by a vision to make the world a better place



Tim Appleton.

for birds. They realised that it was necessary to think big, global even, to raise public awareness and funds for conservation projects worldwide. Their determination would carry them through 30 unforgettable years.

LRWT and RSPB were co-promoters of the event, with RSPB providing marketing expertise throughout the years. Operational planning, day-to-day running, set-up and take-down, and much more were the responsibility of LRWT, its staff and volunteers. LRWT also took on the responsibility and financial risk for the event.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve provided a superb venue thanks to the generosity



of Anglian Water who provided the event site free of charge. BirdLife International was chosen as an appropriate recipient of funds, given their involvement in projects throughout the world in urgent need of support. Sponsors were crucial, from national tourist boards and travel operators to optics suppliers and magazine

publishers. They came back loyally year on year. Artists Robert Gillmor and Carrie Akroyd provided stunning designs for artwork on publicity and merchandise.

Whilst Tim remained Birdfair Manager until 2020, behind the scenes was a large crew. LRWT Rutland Water Nature →

EVENTS VOLUNTEERS & INFORMATION VOLUNTEERS © ERIC RENNO.



**“The first Birdfair in 1989 echoed the pioneering spirit of the RSPB 100 years before, determined to tackle the mass slaughter of birds.”**

Reserve staff formed the “site team”. The “Birdfair team” was run in succession by Yanina Herridge, Emma Tate, and Carole Allen. From 2012 Carole and her small team of Nicola Brown and Sarah Marsh liaised with exhibitors and speakers, allocated and charged for venues and stand space, and arranged catering, services and facilities. *Birdwatch* magazine handled the programme advertising. Volunteers played a huge part in running the ticket gates, stewarding car parks and marquees, selling merchandise, organising recycling and, when it was over, clearing up the site.

**Pioneering projects**

The first Birdfair in 1989 echoed the pioneering spirit of the RSPB 100 years before, determined to tackle the mass slaughter of birds. Many migratory species, including familiar garden birds like the robin, were being killed annually on the island of Malta. Birdfair raised £3,000 to help the Malta Ornithological Society (now BirdLife Malta, a BirdLife Partner) pursue this campaign.

From penguins, albatrosses to parrots to



Activities like bird ringing, pond dipping and nature walks inspired the next generation.



We were delighted to receive support from so many well-known faces.

pittas, a paradise in the Pacific to a lake full of pink flamingos in Argentina or international flyways crucial to migrating birds, Birdfair has helped bird populations throughout the world by reducing pollution, improving habitat management, training young conservationists and raising awareness among local people and governments.

One of Birdfair’s most charismatic campaigns was to Save the Albatross in 2000. Albatrosses, including the globally-threatened black-browed albatross and



**“The real challenge is to inspire everyone else”**

large petrels, were being killed in large numbers, often accidentally caught on longline hooks of fishing vessels. Birdfair raised £122,000 and, after lobbying by BirdLife, an historic Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels’ was opened for signature in 2001 and has since been signed by countries throughout the world. Better protection measures have raised public and political awareness, introduced new fishing equipment and techniques, and contributed to research and monitoring.

Year on year the amount given to projects grew, and by 2003 Birdfair had raised over £1 million for wildlife conservation. By the end of the 2020, with Virtual Birdfair, that figure was over £5 million. That also enabled BirdLife partners to generate much more, with estimates of over £40 million in match funding.

Birdfair became adept at using new technology and social media, and in 2020, when COVID-19 forced its cancellation, Birdfair took a further step and went onto a digital platform, delivering more than 70 hours of content. The most-viewed live session was the ‘State of the Earth’ discussion with Dr Jane Goodall and Chris Packham, amongst others. Virtual Birdfair attracted twice as many online visitors as the live events and engaged the interest of new and diverse audiences.

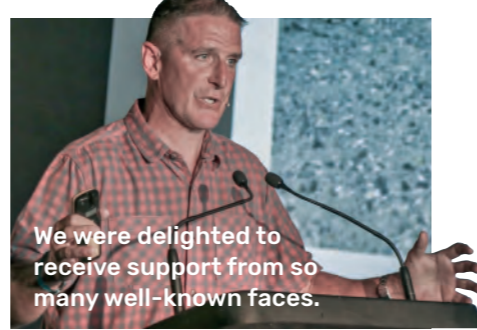


**A legacy to be proud of**

Everyone talks about ‘legacy’ these days, of what you leave to others. Birdfair raised an amazing amount of money, but money is not an end in itself. “The real challenge is to inspire everyone else” wrote zoologist, author and broadcaster Mark Carwardine in the Birdfair 2018 programme.

Birdfair has been inspirational. It has caused people to care, those in power to sit up and take notice, to have a better understanding. It has provided real opportunities for young people at home and abroad to take up careers in conservation. It has encouraged people to start birdwatching festivals in other countries. It has empowered people to join conservation societies, to explore their own surroundings and to find peace in enjoying and respecting the natural environment. For all these reasons, LRWT, our members and Birdfair’s innumerable volunteers can be justifiably proud.

Sylvia Sullivan is a member of The Creative Mix team that helped to produce the publicity material for the Birdfair. Thank you to Carole Allen, Birdfair Organiser, for providing the statistical details.



RECYCLING TEAM © JOE DAVIS, MARY COLWELL © AMANO SAMAPAN, BIRDFAIR © ERIC RENNO.

BIRDFAIR © LRWT.





**We offer an inspiring and educational programme of events for all ages to get involved with.**

To allow for flexibility in changing dates, venues and times, we have moved our full events programme online, including 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.



**Our Wild Walks are back!**

We are delighted to offer monthly Wild Walks around Leicestershire and Rutland at our beautiful nature reserves and wild places. Be guided by our expert conservation staff, learn new skills and tips for identification, meet new like-minded and enthusiastic people, and soak up the summer atmosphere. Book your spaces quickly – they fill up fast!

Sun 1 May, 5-8am  
**Dawn Chorus Walk**  
Volunteer Training Centre, Rutland Water

Wed 4 May, 1-3pm  
**Wonderful warblers**  
Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Rutland Water, with Joe Davis

Wed 18 May, 8-10pm  
**Barn owl walk at sunset**  
Cossington Meadows with Chris Hill

Tues 24th May, 11am-1pm  
**Ketton spring walk**  
Ketton Quarry, with John Bristow

Tues 14 June, 10am-12pm  
**Creation of meadows**  
Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Rutland Water, with Fran Payne

Fri 1 July, 2-4pm  
**Summer walk (members only)**  
Charnwood Lodge, with Neil Pilcher

Thurs 7 July, 10am-1pm  
**Butterfly walk [weather dependent]**  
Cloud Wood with Andy Neilson

Fri 15 July, 9-10.30pm  
**Bats and glow worms**  
Ketton Quarry, with John Bristow & Jenny Harris

Thurs 21 July, 10.30am – 12.30pm  
**Dragonflies and damselflies**  
Cossington Meadows, with Claire Install

Weds 17 August, 7.30-9.30pm  
**Barn owl walk at sunset**  
Cossington Meadows with Chris Hill

Thurs 25 August, 10am-12noon  
**Summer walk**  
Dimmisdale with Andy Neilson

Tues 6 Sept, before sunset, timings TBC  
**Bat walk**  
Narborough Bog with Andy Neilson



# Events and Activities

May - September 2022

*Check online*  
Our full events programme is available online!



Our full events programme is available at:  
[lrwt.org.uk/events](http://lrwt.org.uk/events)

This programme is liable to change or cancellation, for which LRWT can accept no liability. Members and non-members are welcome unless otherwise stated.



## Local Groups

**With restrictions now lifted, some Local Groups have resumed indoor meetings, whilst some are preferring to stay online. Please note that face-to-face talks are subject to any future COVID-19 regulations.**

**Charnwood Local Group**  
Indoor meetings: Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall, 50 Main St, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough, LE12 8RZ. Admission £2.50/members, £3/non-members, children free. Contact Kate Moore on 01509 891005, katemoore123@yahoo.co.uk.

**Great Bowden Local Group**  
Indoor meetings: The Village Hall, The Green, Great Bowden. Admission £2.50/members, £3.50/non-members. 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**  
Indoor meetings: Ashby Methodist Chapel, Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Admission £3/person. 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.lrw@gmail.com.

**Rutland Local Group**  
Indoor meetings: Volunteer Training Centre, off Oakham Road, Hambleton, LE15 8AD. Admission £2. Meetings also broadcast online via Zoom. Contact Becky Howard on 07908 252271.

**Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group**  
Contact Dr David Duckett on 0116 259 7231, info@badgergroup.org.uk.

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Join one of our walks and surveys around Leicestershire and Rutland. Please wear suitable clothes and appropriate footwear for the weather and bring a torch. Some bat detectors will be available but if you have your own, please bring it. Events may be cancelled in adverse weather. Walks are free to bat group members and £3 for non-members. Booking is essential as numbers are limited. Text 07897 123566, leave a message on 01572 755274, or email batevents@outlook.com.



## MAY

**Charnwood Group**  
Weds 11 May, 7.30pm  
**A wildlife quiz for everyone**  
The wildlife quiz is back with new quizmasters. Organise your team beforehand or join others on the night. Bring your own drinks and nibbles.

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Fri 27 May, 9.30pm  
**Walk at Watermead North Country Park**  
Meet at Whiles Lane, Birstall, LE4 4EE.

## JUNE

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Weds 8 June, 9pm  
**Dusk survey at Egleton Church**  
Oakham, LE15 8AD. NBMP survey of soprano pipistrelle maternity roost with hundreds of bats emerging.

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Thurs 9 June, 9pm  
**Dusk survey of soprano pipistrelles**  
Braunston-in-Rutland Church, LE15 8QS.

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Mon 20 June, 9pm  
**Dusk survey of soprano pipistrelles**  
Braunston-in-Rutland Church, LE15 8QS.

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Tues 21 June, 9pm  
**Dusk survey at Egleton Church**  
Oakham, LE15 8AD.

## JULY

**Rutland Local Group**  
Sun 3 July, 2pm  
**Guided walk at Bloody Oaks Quarry Nature Reserve**

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Fri 22 July, 9.30pm  
**Walk at Zouch**  
LE12. A walk through fields and along the river Soar near Zouch.

## AUGUST

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Fri 5 August, 9pm  
**Walk at Moira Furnace**  
A walk along the canal and through the furnace plantation.

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Fri 19 August, 8.30pm  
**Walk around Aylestone Meadows**  
Past the meadow and back along the canal towpath.

## SEPTEMBER

**Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group**  
Sat 10 September, 7pm  
**Walk at Lyndon Nature Reserve**  
Rutland Water, LE15 8RN.



# Events

at Rutland Water Nature Reserve

Rutland Water Nature Reserve hosts hundreds of wildlife events, courses and training opportunities throughout the year, suitable for all ages and abilities. Activities take place from the Volunteer Training Centre, Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Lyndon Visitor Centre or Whitwell Harbour. Check our website for full details.

## Spotlight on ...

### Botanical Illustration Workshops, with Dawn Wright CBI FSBA

Try your hand at art whilst connecting with nature on our new courses with professional botanical artist Dawn Wright.

**Where:** Volunteer Training Centre  
**When:** 12 & 13th May, 29 & 30 Sept 10am-4pm  
**Cost:** £90/person, art packs available at additional cost  
**Suitable for:** beginners and improvers

Dawn Wright studied Botanical Illustration for 3 years at Leicester College and has been teaching botanical art for several years. She is a Fellow of the Society of Botanical Artists and a member of several UK and international botanical art societies. She enjoys introducing students to botanical art and is enthusiastic about raising the profile of the genre, encouraging others to develop their observation and artistic skills.

Dawn's workshops are suitable for both beginners and improvers. Attendees will learn about the art of botanical painting and the science behind this fine detailed technique. Class sizes are kept small to allow for a good mix of individual and group tuition, enabling everyone to progress at their own pace in a supportive environment. Workshops will be held at the Volunteer Training Centre, set in the tranquillity of Rutland Water with views overlooking the beautiful lagoon.

Register at [lrwt.org.uk/events](http://lrwt.org.uk/events)  
 Or contact Helen for further details [hfairhead@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:hfairhead@lrwt.org.uk)



## Get involved with...

**Osprey Cruises** are one of the most exciting ways of seeing ospreys at Rutland Water, aboard the Rutland Belle. Cruises start on Sat 21st May and take place throughout the summer. A full schedule is available online. Meet by the Rutland Belle in Whitwell Harbour, LE15 8BL. Wrap up warm – it can be chilly on the water!  
 Book online [lrwt.org.uk/osprey-cruises](http://lrwt.org.uk/osprey-cruises).

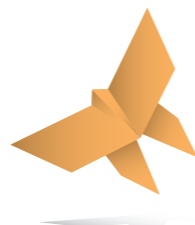
**Guided walks & activities** including wildlife walks, weekend courses (including drystone walling, hedge-laying and stick dressing), identification classes, family drop-in sessions and interesting talks. Look for Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walks, Guided Wildlife Walks with Jeff and specialist walking tours.

**Wildlife Book Club** at the Lyndon Visitor Centre on the first Wednesday of the month from 11.30am –

1.30pm. We select a couple of books, making the most of contemporary nature writing and classic literature. Free to attend, refreshments available to purchase.

**Adult Craft Club** at Lyndon Visitor Centre, every Tuesday 10.30am - 12:30pm, including stitching, papercrafts, printing, knitting, painting and jewellery making. Come with your own project or try your hand at something new. No experience needed. £3 to attend (inc. refreshments and basic materials).

Let us know you're coming to the **Wildlife Book Club** or **Adult Craft Club**. Contact Laura Brady [lbrady@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:lbrady@lrwt.org.uk) or call 01572 737378.



## See [lrwt.org.uk/events](http://lrwt.org.uk/events) to book Wildlife Watch events.

**Wildlife Watch Members Hub**  
 Keep up to date with Wildlife Watch on the Members Hub.

Find out more: [lrwt.org.uk/members](http://lrwt.org.uk/members)  
 Our two Wildlife Watch groups are currently fully booked.

Contact Rachel Ibbotson on [ww@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:ww@lrwt.org.uk) to be added to the waiting list. You can still do Hedgehog and Kestrel Award activities at home. See the Members Hub for more information.



### Fun-filled summer with Family events

Enjoy a wild summer with our family activities from Wild Play, trails and activities at Lyndon Visitor Centre, and a summer members-only Wildlife Watch Family Experience. Details available via the monthly Family e-Newsletter, quarterly Wild Times newsletter and on the Members Hub.



### Wild Play: Saving the Saffron Brook

Tues 31 May, Tues 12 & Weds 13 July, Tues 2 Aug  
 Discover what lives in the Saffron Brook and make a natural raft. Free funded sessions, places limited. We are supporting the Saving Saffron Brook project led by Leicester City Council, by delivering Wild Play sessions at the brook in Knighton Park.

### Wild Play at Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton, Leicester

Wed 1 June – **30 Days Wild:** wildlife discovery and craft activities.  
 Wed 20 July – **Dens:** build a shelter and play games.  
 Wed 27 July – **Fire:** Learn how to safely make a fire and cook something yummy.  
 Wed 3 Aug – **Minibeasts:** Come bug hunting and create a bug to take home.  
 Wed 10th Aug – **Ponds:** Explore the wildlife in the pond and make a pond creature.  
 Wed 17th Aug – **Flower Power:** the wonderful world of flowers.  
 Wed 24th August – **Fire:** Learn how to safely make a fire and cook something yummy.  
 Sessions last 90 minutes in the morning or afternoon. Times vary, please check when booking.  
 £5 per child aged 5 – 12 years; £2.50 for younger siblings 2-4 years if booked with

full paying child.  
 1 adult per family (1 adult up to 3 children) must supervise throughout.  
 Booking essential. Family Member priority booking available 30th April - 16th May for 1st June, and 6th June - 4th July for summer holidays. Password on Family Hub and in Family eNews. Membership number required.

### Wild Play at Burbage Common

Dates and details TBC. Look out for info on our social media channels and events webpage.

### Riverside Festival, Leicester

Castle Gardens, Bede Park and Western Boulevard  
 Sat 4- Sun 5 June  
 See us on our stand and enjoy the Festival's activities, performances and craft stalls. Free to attend, no booking required.

### Wildlife Watch Family Experience

Sun 3 July  
**Wild Summer at Cossington Meadows**  
 Including minibeast hunting, pebble painting, activity trail, and barefoot walk. Booking essential, members Only. Password on Family Hub and in Family eNews. Membership number required.

## Green Influencers continue to tackle environmental issues in Leicester



It's been a busy start to 2022 with new Green Influencers groups being established, and long-standing groups underway with their environmental projects. Dedicated funding allows Green Influencer groups to transform their school grounds and run environmental projects to inspire their classmates to take action for wildlife.

The Rushey Mead Wildlife Warriors have been transforming their school garden by growing vegetables in their new garden planter and the installation of a picnic bench. The Mayflower Earth Savers are improving their school allotment plot and have been creating an allotment guide to be used both by teachers and pupils when visiting the site. The Sandfield Close Eco-Buddies are putting together their nature 'playground activity bags', which will encourage pupils to explore the outdoors using magnifying bug pots, binoculars and wildlife spotter sheets.

The 115th Leicester Scouts Planet Protectors are a new group keen to

increase habitats and opportunities for wildlife. They have created recycled bottle bird feeders and will be making mini-bug hotels. Young people from FOCUS charity have also recently joined the scheme, concentrating on issues around litter. They have been learning about their ecological footprint and have carried out a litter survey on their group allotment plot.

If you know of a group of young people (10-14 years old) who would like to become Green Influencers and are available to start a project in 2022, please contact **Hannah Keys**, [hkeys@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:hkeys@lrwt.org.uk).

For more information, visit: [lrwt.org.uk/green-influencers](http://lrwt.org.uk/green-influencers)

The Green Influencers Scheme is an environmental youth social action project funded by The Ernest Cook Trust and the #iwill Fund. The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department of Culture, Media & Sport are each investing £25 million seed funding to create the #iwill Fund.

# Can you do something



## #30DaysWild

1-30 June



# wild

## every day for

# 30 days?

#30DaysWild is the UK's month-long challenge from The Wildlife Trusts



Last year, over 750,000 people went **WILD** in June. Join them by making time for nature every day for 30 days.



Sign up to receive your

# free pack

to help you go

# WILD



Scan with your phone camera to sign up



# [lrwt.org.uk/30dayswild](http://lrwt.org.uk/30dayswild)