

Wild

Leicestershire
and Rutland

Membership magazine

Autumn 2022

SPOOKY SPECIES

Meet the unseen stars
of Halloween

GREEN INFLUENCERS

Leicester's young people are
standing up for nature

RIGHT TREE, RIGHT PLACE

How tree planting for climate
change has got to work for wildlife



**Leicestershire
& Rutland**
Wildlife Trust

Welcome

Welcome to our autumn edition of *Wild!*

I'm writing this as the new Chief Executive Officer of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, having taken up the role at the end of August.

I am hugely excited and very proud to be joining the Trust. I have always had a passion for wildlife and the environment, and so joining an organisation that works hard to protect the natural world is a great privilege. I started my career as a Conservation Officer with the National Rivers Authority, reintroducing otters into the Rivers Test and Itchen. Since then I have worked with a range of environmental organisations including the Environment Agency, Natural England, The National Trust and most recently with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. For me, getting outdoors and enjoying our wildlife and wild places is not only one of my favourite things, but also something I recognise as being so important for our wellbeing.

Earlier this year the Trust published our new Strategy to 2030, which contains vital and demanding targets to bring nature back. I am looking forward to working alongside staff, trustees, volunteers, members and supporters, as well as a wide range of local and regional partners to deliver these. As an organisation, we recognise that the threats of climate breakdown and ecological collapse are the most important issues of our time; we have reached a tipping point for nature. By 2030, we must see nature recovering, wildlife returning and ecosystems restored. You can read more on p19 about how we plan to do this.

Engaging more people with nature will be vital to our new strategy. Read more about how we have been working in partnership for nature with Melton Building Society over the last eight years on p20, and how our Green Influencers are creating exciting projects to help people protect their local environment on p22. Find out about how volunteering with LRWT helped shape a young person's career in conservation on p24 and read an inspiring story of how one member has transformed her garden for wildlife on p26.

I am really looking forward to meeting as many members as possible over the coming months and I hope to see some of you virtually at our Annual General Meeting in November (p32). Thank you for your ongoing support as we look forward to building a Wilder Leicestershire and Rutland together.

Mat Carter

CEO, LRWT



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

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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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Membership Officer Josephine Taylor

The Wildlife Trust Magazine Team

Editor Lucy McRobert and Harriet Girling

Designers Yarwood Associates

UK Editor Tom Hibbert

UK Designer Ben Cook

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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



Will you leave a Wilder Future this Remember a Charity Week?



Gifts in Wills are hugely important in funding our work. In the last century, we have seen significant changes to our landscape, causing a decline in many species. We have a vision of a thriving natural world; where nature is in recovery, wildlife is abundant and our landscape across Leicestershire and Rutland is full of wildflowers and alive with birdsong.

With the help of legacy donations, we can make our vision a reality. We can continue to protect the wonderful array of wildlife on our doorstep and we can make more space for nature by restoring and reconnecting wild places. We can empower more people in our communities to take action for nature and educate the next generation about the importance of protecting our natural world.

5th – 11th September is Remember a Charity Week and we are proud to be joining over 200 charities across the country to celebrate all the amazing individuals who support our vital work by leaving a gift to us in their Will. The aim of Remember a Charity Week is to highlight that anyone can leave a legacy gift and “pass on something wonderful” once their loved ones are taken care of. No matter how big or small, every gift counts and has a tremendous impact on our work. **Leaving as little as 1% of your estate can make all the difference.**

We are excited to be working with Guardian Angel to offer our supporters a free Will writing service. You can do it online, over the phone or in person – whichever way suits you best. Many of our members decide to leave a special gift in their Will; however, there is no

obligation to do so if you wish to use the offer.

Leaving a gift in your Will to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust ensures that the wildlife you care so much about is protected well beyond your lifetime. With your support, future generations will be able to enjoy and experience nature just as you do today.



Find out how a gift in your Will can help wildlife and write your Will for free at lrwt.org.uk/legacy



HEDGEHOG © TOM MARSHALL.

First LRWT Youth Conference is a success

On Monday 30th May, we hosted our first ever Youth Conference Event. We were excited to welcome a group of 22 young environmental activists, all aged between 10-16 years old, to Beaumont Hall at the University of Leicester Botanic Gardens. During the event, the group listened to several speakers,

which included both LRWT staff and Trustees, and took part in different taster workshops. These included learning about different environmental careers, developing new species identification skills and increasing their knowledge about the different ways that they can continue to take environmental action,

whilst inspiring others to care for their planet. The group also ventured out into the Botanic Gardens to identify and survey wildflowers using a quadrat, and discovered some new species along the way. At the end of the event, the group wrote their own environmental pledge on a terracotta pot and filled it with compost and some herb seeds, kindly donated by Homebase-Leicester. The event was a great success, the young people all left feeling enthused and energised about how they can help protect nature and the environment.



© LRWT.

Launde Woods chosen to be part of an Ancient Canopy in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

We were delighted that Launde Park Wood and Launde Big Wood were chosen earlier this year to be part of a nationwide network of Ancient Woodlands dedicated to The Queen in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee. The network of 70 Ancient Woodlands and 70 Ancient Trees across the United Kingdom form part of the Ancient Canopy in celebration of Her Majesty's 70 years of service. The initiative was launched by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, who is Patron of The Queen's Green Canopy. Made up of two of the most ancient woodlands in Leicestershire, stepping into Launde Park Wood and Launde Big Wood is like stepping back in time. Both reserves are amazing places for wildlife with a fascinating cultural history. In the past, both woodlands were part of the Royal Leighfield Forest and part of the lands associated with Launde Priory (now Launde Abbey), later appropriated by

Thomas Cromwell after the dissolution of the monasteries.

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

work in partnership with Launde Abbey to preserve the ancient woodlands for wildlife and future generations to enjoy.



© LRWT.

UK UPDATE



Nextdoor Nature

A ground-breaking new Wildlife Trusts initiative is bringing communities together to rewild their neighbourhoods. Nextdoor Nature will give people the skills, tools, and opportunity to take action for nature in the places where they live and work. The initiative was made possible by a £5 million investment from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, to leave a lasting natural legacy in honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Nextdoor Nature will provide solutions to two of the most important issues that The Wildlife Trusts are working to address: the urgent need to create more space for nature, with a goal to restore 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030; and the need to make nature a part of everyone's daily life. We know that spending time in nature can bring huge benefits to our health and wellbeing, but we don't all have the same level of access to green or wild spaces.

Research shows that 85% of people in nature-deprived areas say more natural spaces would improve their quality of life. The importance of this was reinforced by the pandemic, which demonstrated how vital it is to have access to nature in your

local area. Nextdoor Nature will bring a wild touch to the places that need it most, improving the lives of people from some of the most disadvantaged areas across the UK. This could include establishing wild habitats and green corridors in areas of economic and nature deprivation, rewilding school grounds, or naturalising highly urbanised or unused areas. Most importantly, through Nextdoor Nature, it will be local communities that decide on what happens and drive the change in their neighbourhood.

The initiative will bring huge benefits for nature, too. One of the big problems facing our wildlife is fragmentation — wild places are isolated and disconnected, preventing plants and animals from moving freely across the landscape. By creating green corridors and wild patches in urbanised areas, we can reconnect our wild networks, creating pit-stops for pollinators, buffets for birds and bats, and highways for hedgehogs.

Liz Bonnin, President of The Wildlife Trusts, says: "We humans are key to solving the climate crisis and restoring our natural heritage. The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, but Nextdoor Nature is working to set that right, putting local communities

at the heart of helping our wild places to recover, and making sure that no matter where we live, we can be part of this crucial endeavour."

Learn more about this inspiring new project at wildlifetrusts.org/nextdoor-nature

Examples of communities that The Wildlife Trusts will work alongside include:

- Young people from minority ethnic communities, young people with disabilities and those who live in socio-economically disadvantaged areas of London
- Aspiring leaders in Scotland, who will have the opportunity to develop the skills needed to inspire and support their local communities to take action for nature
- Communities in Derby where language barriers (71 languages are spoken) and residential segregation have created some of the most socially isolated areas in the Midlands

UK UPDATE

Full marks for new school subject

This April, the UK Government announced the introduction of a new GCSE in natural history. From 2025, secondary school students in England will have the opportunity to study the natural world, developing an in-depth knowledge of wildlife and wider ecosystems, as well as real-life experience of nature. The GCSE will teach transferable skills in observation, identification, classification and data gathering, and how to apply this knowledge to real world issues. The announcement follows years of campaigning to make nature part of the curriculum, led by naturalist and writer Mary Colwell.

Providing young people with the knowledge to protect the planet is

essential for the future of the natural world, as is inspiring a connection to nature. The new natural history GCSE is a great first step, but this journey needs to start sooner and involve all pupils in the UK, regardless of the subjects they study.

We want to see children given opportunities to spend at least an hour a day learning outside, and for nature and climate education to be embedded across all subjects and at all levels. This message has been championed by thousands of young people through the Our Bright Future programme, who want greater opportunities to learn in, and about, nature.

Read our full response to the new GCSE at wtru.st/new-GCSE



Sky-high ambitions

Wild About Gardens, an annual joint initiative between The Wildlife Trusts and the Royal Horticultural Society, is setting its sights sky-high as we go wild about our high-flying birds. This year, the focus is on swifts, swallows and martins — summer visitors that have suffered some serious declines. Plummeting insect populations and loss of nesting sites have contributed

to swifts and house martins joining the UK's red list, marking them as birds in dire need of help. The campaign is calling on the public to help by nurturing insect-friendly gardens and adding nest boxes to homes.

Find out more at wildaboutgardens.org.uk

UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



1 Raptor real estate

A pair of peregrine falcons have nested for the first time on St Albans Cathedral, thanks to a nesting tray provided by the Wilder St Albans project — a collaboration between Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and St Albans City and District Council. The St Albans pair is one of only five pairs breeding in Hertfordshire.

wtru.st/st-albans-nest

2 Hope for hazel dormice

Surrey Wildlife Trust has trained more than 100 volunteers to help hedgerows flourish across Surrey's North Downs, giving hope to the iconic hazel dormice. Even small gaps in a hedgerow can be a barrier to dormice, isolating populations. The new volunteer task force is surveying, laying and planting hedgerows to help dormice populations expand.


wtru.st/dormice-hope



3 Scuttled cuttle

A rare pink cuttlefish was found on a Cornish beach, following late winter storms. This small species is more commonly seen in the Mediterranean, with only sporadic records from southern Britain. The discovery was made by Cornwall Wildlife Trust volunteers and recorded in the Trust's Marine Strandings Network.

wtru.st/pink-cuttlefish

**Dave Goulson** @DaveGoulson @dave.goulson

Silent Earth: Averting the Insect Apocalypse

“ Since I was a child I have been obsessed with insects; they are amazing, often beautiful, and with fascinating, peculiar lives. I grew up in the countryside, and spent my childhood roaming the lanes and meadows in search of caterpillars, butterflies, grasshoppers and beetles. My bedroom filled with jam jars, cages and tanks housing all manner of small beasts. I eventually came to learn that the world would not function without these tiny creatures. They pollinate; control pests; recycle all sorts of organic material from dung to corpses, tree trunks and leaves; they keep the soil healthy; disperse seeds; and provide food for many larger creatures such as birds, bats, lizards, amphibians and fish.

It should thus be of profound concern to all of us that insects appear to be undergoing massive declines. As a child, I vividly remember my parents having to stop the car on long summer journeys to scrub clear the windscreen, which quickly became crusted with splatted insects as we drove along. Today, our windscreens are disturbingly clean.

The causes of insect declines are many: habitat loss to intensive farming, housing and other developments; the ever-growing blizzard of pesticides used by farmers and gardeners; climate change; light pollution; impacts of invasive species and more. Our tidy, pesticide-infused world is largely hostile to insect life.

This may all seem terribly depressing, but do not despair. We may feel helpless in the face of many global environmental issues, but as I explain in my book *Silent Earth*,

we can all get involved in reversing insect declines. If you are lucky enough to have a garden, take some simple steps to invite insects and other wildlife in; it is astonishing how much life a small garden can support. If you have no garden, you might consider joining national and local campaigns to fill our urban greenspaces with wildflowers, or to have your town or village declared pesticide-free. Imagine every garden, park, cemetery, roundabout and road verge filled with swathes of wildflowers. We could create a national network of wildlife-rich habitat from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Of course we should not forget our farmland, which covers 70% of the UK. It is my view that the move towards ever-more intensive, pesticide-soaked monoculture farming is unsustainable; it has done terrible damage to our wildlife and soils, pollutes streams and rivers, and contributes a lot to greenhouse gas emissions. You can reduce your own impact and support more sustainable farming practices by buying and eating local, seasonal, organic produce, buying loose fruit and veg, and reducing your meat consumption. Better still, grow what food you can in your garden or an allotment.

Love them or loathe them, we all need insects. We have to learn to live in harmony with nature, seeing ourselves as part of it, not trying to rule and control it with an iron fist. Our survival depends upon it, as does that of the glorious array of life with which we share our planet.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As we live through a time of great uncertainty, food security is an important issue. But it's vital we consider nature in any plans. Industrial agriculture has destroyed wildlife on a grand scale. Further intensification will be a huge blow for nature and climate, but also jeopardise long-term food security.

Learn more:
wtru.st/energy-food

Dave Goulson is a professor of biology at the University of Sussex, one of the UK's leading insect experts, and an ambassador for The Wildlife Trusts. He champions insects in his latest book, *Silent Earth: Averting the Insect Apocalypse*.

Get more tips on how to help insects at



[wildlifetrusts.org/
action-for-insects](http://wildlifetrusts.org/action-for-insects)



Volunteer Training Centre celebrates 7 years of being open

To mark the seventh anniversary of the opening of our Volunteer Training Centre at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, we held a celebration event on the seventh day of the seventh month to say thank you to funders and volunteers.

In the time since Sir David Attenborough first cut the ribbon on 7th July 2015 as part of a special opening ceremony, the state-of-art-facility has been a vital resource for Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. The centre provides a base for delivering effective practical nature conservation work at the reserve and enables volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to get the most out of their experience with us. Over the years, we have welcomed regular groups, including our popular Book Club and our very skilled Wildlife Gardening Club. We have also run many workshops, courses and activities, and have recruited and trained 14 Trainee Reserve Officers, who have gone on to do amazing things for nature.

To celebrate seven successful years of

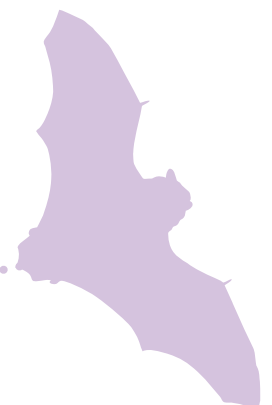


the Volunteer Training Centre, we held a special event on the 7th July this year. Staff, trustees and volunteers, along with special guests, including Anglian Water our conservation partner at the reserve, representatives from organisations that helped fund the building and Dr Sarah Furness, Lord Lieutenant of Rutland,

joined us for the celebration. Guests were shown presentations on the past achievements of the Centre and given an insight into what the future holds. We were also delighted to unveil a special painting of Rutland Water at the event, which was painted and donated to the Centre by LRWT volunteer Joan Brady.



NATHUSIUS PIPISTRELLA © ALIS PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK



Watching bats is not as straightforward as watching birds, not least because they are nocturnal. Their echolocation calls are mostly above the range of our hearing, except for social chatter in their roosts. Therefore, the best experiences come with bat detectors, which convert echolocation into audible sound. A simple, recreational detector is the Magenta Mk5, or an EchoMeter Touch can turn your Android smartphone or tablet into a bat detector, identifying the bat sounds for you.

You can start looking for bats in your garden, the local parks or churchyards, however, if you'd like to travel further afield, Leicestershire and Rutland have several water bodies with insect-rich habitats, like Swithland, Cropston, Thornton and Eyebrook reservoirs. At these places, and over rivers and canals, bats can be spotted foraging in the gloaming. By using a detector, you'll soon learn to distinguish between common and soprano pipistrelles, the high-flying noctule, and Daubenton's bats, which skim the water's surface for insects.



Charnwood Lodge has recorded ten species, including the rare serotine bat, which has only been identified on bat detectors, never in the hand. Brown's Hill Quarry is recognised as one of the best hibernation sites in the East Midlands, with five species of bats using the old mine for hibernation (brown long-eared, Daubenton's, Natterer's, whiskered and Brandt's). Launde Park Wood hosts at least ten species, and Dimminsdale and Cloud Wood are excellent, too. Even meadows have foraging bats, sometimes including rare barbastelle. Best of all is Rutland Water with its adjacent woodlands, where ten species of bats have been recorded, including the rare Nathusius' pipistrelle. →

Natty bats

Silent, secretive, surprising: bats are the unseen mammalian heroes of the night. Now, the search is back on at Rutland Water for one of the UK's rarest bats: the Nathusius' Pipistrelle.

By Jenny Harris and Tim Sexton



Feeling natty

Nathusius' pipistrelle is the largest of the three resident pipistrelles in the UK. It is similar to its commonly found relatives, but has larger, broader wings, and the longer fur on its back sometimes gives a shaggy appearance.

Like many bats, it favours deciduous mixed woodlands and park landscapes, often near water, and is insectivorous, feasting nightly on midges, mosquitoes and black flies, caddis flies, aphids and other small insects. Roosts range from bark crevices and tree holes to bat boxes and rock crevices.

This migratory species can fly many hundreds of kilometres in late autumn and spring, although a small, breeding population is resident in Britain all year round (topped-up by winter migrants from the Continent). It is considered rare in the UK, though records have increased in recent years. The first records in Great Britain occurred in the 1940s, a long way

from Rutland in the Shetland Islands.

National Nathusius Pipistrelle Project

The National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project has been running since 2014 through the Bat Conservation Trust and was launched with a grant from the People's Trust for Endangered Species.

It aimed to determine the resident and breeding status of Nathusius' pipistrelle in Great Britain and establish the migratory origins of Nathusius' pipistrelles in Great Britain.

"Nathusius' Pipistrelles were first

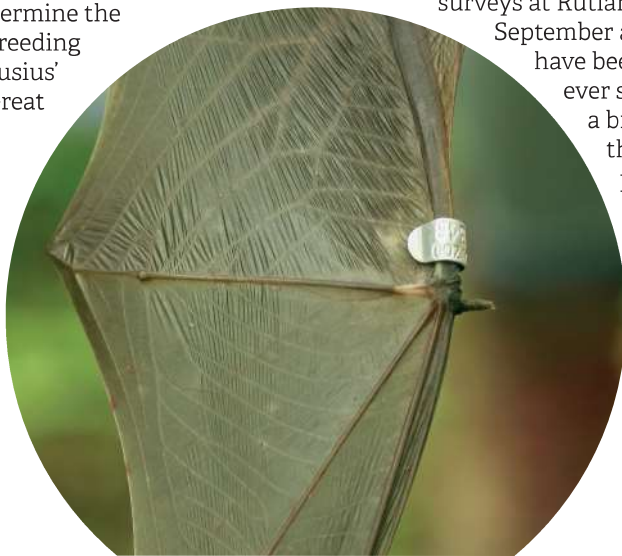
identified around Rutland Water by members of Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group in 2006. As a result Rutland Water was included as part of the initial Nathusius' Pipistrelle surveys in 2014",

explains Tom Bennett from Derbyshire Bat Group, who now leads the Project at Rutland Water. "We started trapping surveys at Rutland that

September and they have been carried out ever since, with a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We're excited to get started again this year!"

At Rutland Water, 130 boxes have been installed as part of the





have been recaptured after being ringed, showing movement of bats around Rutland Water.”

A boost for bats

Over the years, LRWT has erected bat box schemes on many of its nature reserves, including Launde Park Wood, Prior’s Coppice, Dimminsdale, Ulverscroft and Charnwood Lodge. Boxes are also used by groups of bats for breeding, known as maternity colonies.

Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group count the bats at several churches for the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP), organised by the Bat Conservation Trust. This programme monitors roosts annually to assess the status of bat species at a national scale, looking largely at long term population trends. Locally, many churches support important colonies, including Daubenton’s at Hoby church, Natterer’s at Garthorpe and other east Leicestershire churches, and large colonies of soprano pipistrelles at Braunston-in-Rutland, Egleton and Cold Overton. In 2020, the maternity roost at St. Edmund’s church, Egleton, held an amazing 1,140 breeding female soprano pipistrelles, making it the highest count of this species for the NBMP in England. The important colony of Natterer’s bats at Charnwood Lodge is also counted for this programme. 🐉



National Nathusius’ Pipistrelle Project, with many in use in early autumn as mating roosts, occupied by a dominant male and often several females. As part of the humane trapping process, Nathusius’ pipistrelles are fitted with a small aluminium identification ring, which allows the bats to be identified if they are found in the future. This method has highlighted some impressive journeys made by these tiny animals. “The longest recorded journey from the UK was recorded in August 2021,” explains Tom, “when a Nathusius ringed in Greater London was found in Russia - 2,018km away!”

“So far through the Rutland Water project,” Tom continues, “65 Nathusius’ pipistrelles have been ringed at several sites identified around the reservoir at Egleton, Barnsdale, Burley Wood, Lyndon, Hambleton and Whitwell. Some of these have also been found using bat boxes across the reserve. Furthermore, 13 bats

Fact file

Head & body length: 46mm - 55mm

Wingspan: 228mm - 250mm

Weight: 6g - 16g

Flight: slightly faster, but less manoeuvrable, than other pipistrelles.

Echolocation: 36-62 kHz (optimum: 38-39 kHz)

Fur: shaggy, reddish-brown, occasionally with frosted tips on the belly.

Ears: membranes and face are usually very dark.

You can learn the finer identification points of Nathusius’ bats on courses or visit nathusius.org.uk



A bat needs help if:

- it is on the ground or floor
- it is hanging in the open during the day
- is in the living area of a dwelling or other building
- it has been in contact with a cat (it may be injured)
- it is stuck to something, such as fly-paper or barbed wire
- its roost has been disturbed or it is a baby separated from its mother.

Always seek help from an experienced bat carer. If handling the bat, wear gloves (preferably leather). Use a secure container, preferably cardboard without any holes wider than 5mm, and include a cloth and a very shallow container of water.

The Bat Conservation Trust

Helpline 0345 1300 228

bats.org.uk/advice/help-ive-found-a-bat

Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group

Bat rescue network: 01572 755274 or 07897 123566.

lrbatgroup.btck.co.uk

lrbgemail@gmail.com

Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group is affiliated to LRWT. Its role is the study of bats locally, ecology and conservation, as well as running a Bat Rescue Network.

6 species to be **spooked** by this autumn

As the nights draw in and the weather turns wild, as pumpkins ripen and Halloween lurks just around the corner, autumn is the perfect time to learn about and even look for some of our spookiest, most spectacular wildlife. Some of the most unusual species have evolved quirky traits to survive in a competitive world, bewitching and befuddling humans for centuries. Fungi erupt out of the ground in an array of shapes, sizes and smells, like stinkhorn fungus, with a phallic shape and the pungent scent of rotting meat. It's the time when house spiders appear in the corners of our bedrooms. The males are looking for mates to breed with; after repeated copulation, he will die and be devoured by his partner. Bats gather in autumn roosts in caves, ancient woodlands and older buildings, like churches, emerging at dusk to feast for the night. Of course, none of these species are dangerous, or even scary. This is evolution at work, a touch freaky, but fascinating.

Six scary species

1 Devil's finger fungus

This smelly, strange looking fungus has eye-catching red tentacles that splay out like a starfish. This fungus smells like rotting flesh which attract insects. They are rare, but can be found amongst leaf litter under trees.

2 'Zombie' ladybird

Meet the parasitic wasp that protects itself from predators by turning a ladybird into a "bodyguard". The female wasp injects an egg into the ladybird, the larva munches on its host's internal tissues before breaking out through the abdomen.



3 Barn owl

Beautiful and beguiling, the ghostly barn owl haunts grasslands, wetlands and farmland in search for a tasty snack – a small rodent or bird for instance. They attack from above on silent wings, and can turn their heads 270°.



4 Death's-head hawk-moth

So called for the skull-and-crossbones pattern on their abdomen, this large moth emits a squeak when alarmed, made by expelling air through its proboscis. The species is nocturnal, and the caterpillars even eat deadly nightshade.



5 Wolf spider

Wolf spiders are expert hunters which track, chase and leap upon their prey – much like actual wolves, but much smaller. They don't make webs, but cast a silk strand into the air to form a 'parachute', which allows them to float on the wind.



6 Witches' broom

Looking like a dense tangled bird's nest, witches' brooms are a growth on a tree that results in bunches of stem, leaf or root material growing from one point on a tree. They are caused by microorganisms, usually a fungus, virus or bacteria, and are a type of gall.



Be
spellbound
this autumn

Wildlife Trusts across the UK run guided walks and events around Halloween to see autumn wildlife up close. Search for your nearest at wildlifetrusts.org/events

ZOMBIE LADYBIRD © TIM SEXTON, BARN OWL © ANDY ROUSE 2020VISION, DEATHS HEAD HAWK MOTH © BIARMICUS/SHUTTERSTOCK, WOLF SPIDER © JOHN BRIDGES, WITCHES' BROOM © SARA H2/SHUTTERSTOCK



Take an autumn amble around Lucas Marsh

Nestled in a quiet corner of Brocks Hill Country Park, just a few miles from Leicester City centre, lies Lucas Marsh Nature Reserve. This reserve is owned by the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and managed under a long-term lease to LRWT. Let Conservation Officer **Andy Neilson** guide you around this small-but-mighty site...



A true wildlife oasis in the heart of suburbia, begin your walk on the western edge of the site **1** in a small area of plantation woodland dominated by ash, planted in the early 1990s. This area is used by our education team to run Forest School sessions, so keep an eye out for log dens and mushrooms **2** carved into the tree stumps. We have recently thinned this area to give the trees more room to grow, and to allow more light to reach the woodland floor and encourage understory species such as hawthorn and hazel.

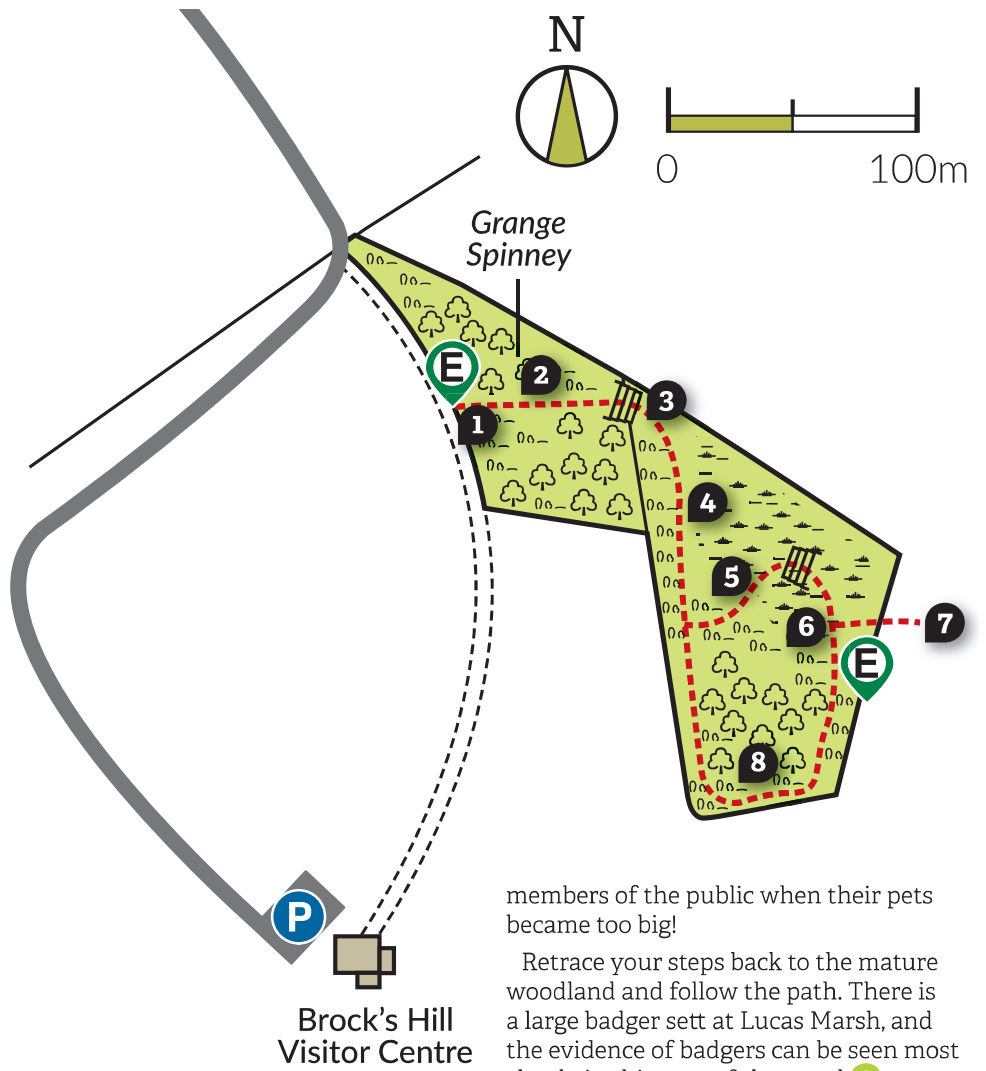
Birdlife can be abundant in this area. Thick mature hedges and scattered guelder-rose bushes provide ideal shelter in the winter for blackbird, fieldfare and

redwing. During the summer, keep an ear out for the repetitive “chip-chop” song of the chiffchaff, and the wonderful melody of the blackcap. Following along the path you will cross a small bridge and begin your journey along the boardwalk **3**. There is a marked change in habitat, moving from the deciduous woodland into fen and swamp. The surrounding land has always drained into this area. Wetland plants such as reed and willowherb do very well, and tree species are dominated by crack willow and alder.

The thorn bushes either side of the boardwalk **4** create a very pleasant “tunnel”, providing habitat for breeding birds. Into early autumn, you might still see speckled wood butterflies patrolling



GRASS SNAKE SWIMMING © MARGARET HOLLAND, KINGFISHER © ROB BATES.



the edges of the path. When you reach the fork turn left and walk through a more open area, where the wetland plants thrive. Sedge warblers and whitethroats belt out their scratchy song from the scrubby patches here in summer **5**, and dragonflies such as four-spotted chasers, common darters and brown hawkers bask on the boardwalk.

Soon you will enter an area of mature woodland **6**. It is drier here, so species like ash and hazel do well. You might hear the sharp “kik-kik-kik” of a great spotted woodpecker calling from the



treetops. The path forks to the left and you can visit two ponds (not managed by LRWT), which are excellent for wildlife **7**. Kingfishers have been recorded and a myriad of dragonfly species. You may even get lucky and spot a grass snake swimming around. These beautiful snakes are just as happy in the water as out of it and spend time hunting for small fish and amphibians. A taste of the exotic can be encountered on occasion. As often happens with suburban ponds, some red-eared terrapins have taken up residence here – likely released by

members of the public when their pets became too big!

Retrace your steps back to the mature woodland and follow the path. There is a large badger sett at Lucas Marsh, and the evidence of badgers can be seen most clearly in this area of the wood **8**. Keep an eye out for fresh areas of digging where they have been rootling around for food and if you're really lucky, you might even spot a latrine site. Badgers like to dig a small hole to do their business in, and these are dotted along the edges of the path here.

Continue along this path, enjoying the whispering of the reeds, and you will find yourself back at the boardwalk, where you can navigate back to the main entrance to the reserve, and warm up in the Visitor Centre, afterwards.

Fact file

The reserve is part of Brock's Hill Country Park, Oadby. Go through the gate to the left of the Centre and walk down the track. The reserve is through another gate on the right. There is an intermittent boardwalk with steps on/off. Sorry, assistance dogs only.

Nearest postcode: LE2 5JJ

Parking: Park in the Brock's Hill Visitor Centre car park.

Size: 2ha

For further information, please see our Nature Reserves Guide or

lrwt.org.uk

Over the past 66 years, our work has protected some of the most important places for nature in Leicestershire and Rutland, but now we must step it up a gear.

By Harriet Girling



Bringing Nature Back
Leicestershire and Rutland
Wildlife Trust's Strategy

2030

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive at The Wildlife Trusts says that “to achieve nature’s recovery, it is no longer enough to just think about slowing the loss of the natural world and protecting what remains of our wildlife. We need to stop and reverse the declines, and put nature in recovery, at scale and at pace, to help restore biodiversity, stabilise the climate, ensure food security, protect the health and wellbeing of billions of people, and much more besides.”

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust is uniquely positioned to inspire and lead the positive ecological change that will be needed across our two counties. We are local, but also part of a strong, cohesive movement of Wildlife Trusts across the country. We have a huge opportunity to enable and empower volunteers, members and supporters to drive change within their own communities.

Our 2030 strategy is simple but ambitious; we want to help reverse

nature’s decline and bring back an abundance of wildlife in our region. Our vision is of a thriving natural world, with our wildlife and habitats playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and people inspired and empowered to take action for nature.

Three Strategic Goals

We have set out three strategic goals that we believe need to happen by 2030 in pursuit of our longer-term vision of a thriving natural world.



1 Nature in recovery

Nature in Leicestershire and Rutland is in recovery with abundant, diverse wildlife and natural processes creating wilder land where people and nature thrive.

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. The State of Nature Report 2019 states that 15% of all species in the UK are under the threat of extinction and since 1970, average abundant species have declined by 13% (figures reflected locally within Leicestershire and Rutland). Given these historic and more recent losses, it is no longer enough just to protect the

wildlife that remains. We will be at the forefront of efforts to reverse the declines in nature in Leicestershire and Rutland. We will maximise local initiatives to reduce climate impact; protect, restore and enhance wildlife and biodiversity through building a resilient Nature Recovery Network; and lead by example by becoming ‘Net Zero’ as an organisation by 2030.

2 Meaningful Action

People in Leicestershire and Rutland are taking action for nature and the climate, resulting in better decision-making for the environment at both the local level and national level.

People are the key to nature’s recovery. As Sir David Attenborough has said, “No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.” We will work to engage and empower people of all ages, identities, cultures, backgrounds and abilities, supporting them to value, enjoy, speak up and take action for wildlife. We aspire to engage 1 in 4 of all

individuals in Leicestershire and Rutland through our ‘Team Wilder’ approach. We will mobilise our supporters to strengthen our campaign and implement local solutions for nature’s recovery. Volunteers, Local Groups, members and local Wildlife Trust supporters of all kinds will be paramount in enabling LRWT to deliver our vision.


3 Nature-based Solutions

Nature in Leicestershire and Rutland is playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems.

Locally, nationally and globally, humanity is facing multiple challenges from the collapse of natural systems and a warming global climate. We will not be able to tackle these problems unless we let nature help. To achieve this, we will seek out opportunities where maximum

biodiversity benefits can be achieved, opportunities for connecting with people, such as LRWT nature reserves, opportunities for flood and drought mitigation, and opportunities for carbon management.

Download and read our full Strategy to 2030

 lrwt.org.uk/strategy



Investing in nature

Our partnership with Melton Building Society is thriving, as they commit to helping protect the natural world.

By Harriet Girling



2022 marks eight years since LRWT forged an exciting partnership with Melton Building Society. In that time, the partnership has gone from strength to strength, and together we have achieved a great deal for local wildlife and wild places. This year, Melton Building Society announced that they would commit to supporting our work for a further two years with an incredible donation of £25,000. To celebrate this generous gift and the start of a new era of working together, we look at what we have accomplished so far.

Melton Building Society came on board as a partner in 2014. Since then, they have been committed in helping us achieve our mission to have 'more wildlife, more wild

PHOTOS OF MELTON BUILDING SOCIETY EMPLOYEES TAKEN AT RUTLAND WATER BY LRWT.

“more wildlife, more wild places and more people having a strong connection to nature”

places and more people having a strong connection to nature’. They have helped raise funds to protect wildlife, encouraged enjoyment of the natural world and increased awareness of the work of LRWT, as part of their core purpose ‘to build thriving communities’.

Simon Taylor, Chief Executive of Melton Building Society explained that they “are committed to ensuring access to nature is available to everyone, and so our shared values mean we love working with our local Wildlife Trust to improve outdoor spaces.”

Working together

In the last 8 years, Melton Building Society have donated over £35,000 to support various aspects of our



“We encourage our colleagues to engage with the outdoors by taking time away from their desks to participate in voluntary activities, such as a recent tree planting project and the very popular Wild Wellbeing Day”

work, including education activities, conservation work and a £15,000 contribution in 2015 towards the construction of our Volunteer Training Centre at Rutland Water Nature Reserve. The Centre has been a vital resource for LRWT over the years, allowing us to train more volunteers, run educational courses and events, and connect with local businesses.

In addition, Melton Building Society have also raised awareness of the work of LRWT in the local community and through their branches by running events, membership promotions and offers, including their ‘Wild Ones’ packs given to young savers.

They have also embraced the partnership internally by encouraging their staff to get out in nature to support their mental health and wellbeing. “We encourage our colleagues to engage with the outdoors,” explained Simon, “by taking time away from their desks to participate in voluntary activities, such as a recent tree planting project and the very popular Wild Wellbeing Day.”

Looking ahead

This year, Melton Building Society have committed to a £25,000 donation that will support our education work across Leicestershire and Rutland over the next two years. The money will help fund our work with schools, enabling us to engage with more young people.

“We have been enthusiastic supporters of LRWT for over eight years and very much look forward to continuing in this partnership,” added Simon. “We firmly believe in the importance of preserving

the environment for future generations, and so it is great to see that our funding will enable dedicated education officers to visit schools and teach children how to protect the natural world and wildlife around them.”

We are so grateful for the continued support we have received from Melton Building Society over the years and very much look forward to continuing this into the future. Their commitment to their local communities has a clear connection with our objectives and creates a great opportunity for us to engage more local people with their local environment. By working with organisations that are passionate about protecting the natural world, we can achieve more for wildlife.

Visit the Melton Building Society website themelton.co.uk



Find out more about how you can work with us to help nature
lrwt.org.uk/corporate



PHOTOS OF MELTON BUILDING SOCIETY EMPLOYEES TAKEN AT RUTLAND WATER BY LRWT.

Young voices for nature

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust is part of a national scheme enabling young people to lead the way on social action and community-led environmental projects. Meet some of the young wildlife champions inspiring a love for local nature in Leicester...

By Hannah Keys

The mission of The Ernest Cook Trust's Green Influencers Scheme is to help 10-14-year-olds create deep, lasting and meaningful connections with the natural environment. Since starting as a Green Mentor, I have witnessed the amazing enthusiasm of young





people wanting to take action for the environment. It is essential to provide opportunities for young people to spend time outdoors, whilst supporting them to feel empowered to protect their planet as environmental ambassadors.

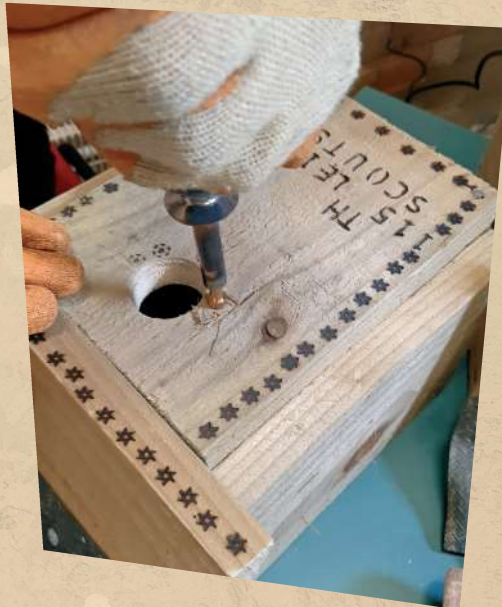
Rushey Mead Academy Wildlife Warriors received nearly £5,000 of Green Influencers Project Grant funding from The Ernest Cook Trust to transform an area of under-used green space in their school grounds. They are developing an all-weather garden that can accommodate outdoor classroom activities, whilst providing a relaxing place where members of the school community can spend time surrounded by nature. One member said "I have chosen to be a Wildlife Warrior to boost my knowledge about the environment. I hope I can continue this project throughout my journey at secondary school."

Mr Kurth, a teacher at the Academy explains how the project has "helped to engage many young people from our city school in nature initiatives, which they would have never had an experience of before. The school garden is developing



brilliantly, and more young people are getting involved to make a difference in this area. Hannah and the Green Influencers Scheme have been the main catalyst for that."

Sandfield Close Eco-Buddies have recently created nature playground activity bags to encourage pupils to explore the outdoors and learn about wildlife. They have been able to develop their skills, build their confidence and work as a team to make a positive difference within their school community. On completion of their project, a member of the group said of their experience "It feels amazing to be a Green Influencer because I love all the fun projects that we do. Saving the environment is important because I love animals and bugs, and more of them are dying. It is important to save them."



115th Leicester Scouts Planet Protectors have used their initial seed funding to purchase and assemble 20 bird nest boxes, which they will donate to various groups and organisations within their local area. The group have also created mini bug hotels and enhanced their species ID skills whilst pond dipping within Evington Park. They say "It is a unique experience and it is very fun".

The Mayflower Earth Savers is the second in Leicester to receive the larger project grant funding from The Ernest Cook Trust. They have significantly enhanced their school allotment plot to increase sustainability, provide more opportunities for outdoor activities and increase their links with the local community. They demonstrated great leadership skills when facilitating an activity session for younger pupils at the allotment and hosted a 'grand opening'

in the summer of 2022. When a member of the group asked why they wanted to become a Green Influencer they said "because we rely on nature, and nature relies on us!"



The Green Influencers Scheme is an environmental youth social action programme funded by The Ernest Cook Trust and the #iwill Fund. The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £54 million joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support young people to access high quality social action. The Ernest Cook Trust is acting as a match funder and awarding grants on behalf of the Fund. The Scheme has granted host organisations funding to support the employment of 44 Green Mentors across 37 organisations. The Green Mentors' role is to enable young people to lead the way as 'Green Influencers' on social action projects in their communities.

If you know of a group of young people (between 10-14 years of age) who would like to become Green Influencers please contact Hannah Keys, Green Mentor at hkeys@lrwt.org.uk.

For more information
lrwt.org.uk/green-influencers
ernestcooktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/green-influencers-scheme/

RUSHEY MEAD WILDLIFE WARRIORS, SANDFIELD CLOSE ECOBUDDIES, 115TH LEICESTER SCOUTS PLANET PROTECTORS & MAYFLOWER EARTH SAVERS © HANNAH KEYS.

Team

Wild(er)

our volunteer army



Volunteers play a vital role in our work. They are the backbone of our organisation and without them we simply could not deliver our essential work for wildlife. For one volunteer, it has shaped her life and future career.

By Abi Mustard



Volunteering is so varied, it is almost impossible to capture it in a few words. There are practical volunteers, who help in work parties on our nature reserves. We have people who work with children and young people, supporting our environmental education all around our two counties. Others help with administration or at Lyndon Visitor Centre, with the Rutland Osprey Project or at events.

Each volunteer brings with them knowledge and enthusiasm that really makes a difference to our work. Added together, it all helps to protect our beautiful wildlife and wild places for future generations. As a younger volunteer, I was a little different, but I knew from the start that this was something I cared about.

I have always had an interest in wildlife and nature. The Rutland Osprey Project visited my school in 2011 and I had an opportunity to ask about volunteering opportunities at Rutland Water Nature Reserve. I was already considering a career in conservation, so was keen to get as much experience as possible. The following year, in Year 10 at school, I would need to arrange work experience, and I was thrilled when the Rutland Osprey Project agreed to take me. And it was fantastic!

Stepping up

After this, I was hooked. I volunteered for the local Wildlife Watch group and a brilliant volunteer group for young people called Wildskills, which got me involved with more practical habitat management tasks. I continued for the



next three years, with Wildskills as well as volunteering with the Rutland Osprey Project, before studying Ecology at university.

I graduated in 2018 and became a Trainee Reserves Officer based at Rutland Water, followed by, for the last two years, working on the Rutland Osprey Project in a public engagement role. I have learned so much and have some wonderful memories.

Over the last few years, starting right back when I first volunteered, I have realised my ideal career is one in nature conservation where I am working with people, and I am now moving on into a new public-facing role with Dorset Wildlife Trust. Whilst sad to be leaving Rutland Water Nature Reserve, the place where it all began for me, I have learned so much, both as a volunteer and staff member.

Lifelong impacts

It is only looking back now that I realise how much volunteering has impacted my life and career, and all in a positive way. It is a brilliant way to get your foot in the door and is something I would recommend to anyone thinking about a role in conservation. But more than that, it allowed me to meet like-minded people, make new friends, and was a break from school, university and home life. I have worked alongside inspiring people who have shown me so much support and offered me incredible opportunities.

Overall, volunteering has been instrumental in kick-starting my career, but it also has given me the opportunity to connect more with nature, thereby improving my wellbeing, and I've made many good friends along the way. When you become a volunteer, and I urge anyone, of any age to consider it, you will help protect threatened wildlife, have fun, meet people who share your interests - and benefit from feeling happier, healthier and more connected to nature!

Get involved

We are looking for new volunteers to be part of Team Wilder! We value people from all backgrounds and across a range of ages, with different skill sets, life experiences and knowledge levels. You don't have to have any previous experience, and we will guide you and support you every step of the way.



Find out more
lrwt.org.uk/volunteer

MY WILD LIFE



“We think it’s a privilege”

Janina, Loughborough

We’re meeting people in Leicestershire and Rutland who are making a difference for wildlife. Lucy McRobert meets Janina Holubecki and her partner Char March who live in central Loughborough.

Tell me about your garden. What was it like before?

We didn’t have a garden before we moved here. When we viewed this Victorian terraced house in 2019, we fell in love with its unusually large garden, surrounded by a green oasis of private allotments and other informal gardens. We immediately knew it would be great for wildlife! The previous owners lived here for 40 years and had gardened in a very sympathetic way for nature. It is big for an urban area, but more importantly,

it’s irregular: long and narrow with a big ‘bulge’ on one side, so it has a variety of aspects and planting areas. There are lots of mature trees and shrubs. Unusually for Leicestershire, which is mostly clay, we’re on very free-draining, sandy soil.

What have you done to turn it into a wildlife garden?

Our wildflower meadow was originally turf. The lawn contained a reasonably diverse mix of plants, so I didn’t dig it all up. Instead, in autumn 2019, I raked





“Badgers come to the garden every night”

It's hard to leave bare areas of soil, sowed yellow rattle and meadow grasses and planted about 300 native perennial plant plugs, including common knapweed, ox-eye daisy, common toadflax, great burnet and meadow saxifrage. The following spring, it was covered in the lacy flowers of pignut, which must have come with the turf! We also have lots of ivy on walls, providing winter nectar and berries, plus winter berry-bearing spiky shrubs like cotoneaster and holly. Our ice plants are an autumn nectar source. We allow a few patches of nettles to grow, have several fruit trees and make our own compost and leaf mould. Like many others, we dug a 'Lockdown Pond' in 2020. In autumn and spring, I moved some of the larger self-sown 'weeds' from the vegetable beds, such as foxglove, red campion, forget-me-not and purple toadflax to the flower borders.

What species have you seen?

I'm training as a volunteer grassland surveyor for LRWT's Charnwood Meadows Restoration project and having our own meadow has enhanced my plant identification skills. Butterflies include brimstone, orange tip, holly blue, comma and meadow brown, plus cinnabar and elephant hawk-moths. The pond has breeding smooth newts, and several kinds of dragonflies and damselflies. Frogs

are frequent visitors. Badgers come to the garden every night: we think it's a privilege to share our garden with these amazing creatures.

How have the neighbours reacted?

The neighbours are generally very positive, especially the beekeeper on one of the next-door allotments. There will always be someone who thinks a meadow is a waste of a lawn, but others have said how lovely it looks in full flower.



Is your wildflower meadow easy to maintain?

You must create a low soil fertility in your meadow, and maintain it in successive years: be scrupulous about removing grass cuttings. I only cut our meadow in late summer. After scything, I really scalp it to remove as much vegetation as possible. Now, I'm just left with mowing the paths around the meadow and between the veg beds, plus a small lawn near the house and



another under the fruit trees. We do less tidying than many traditional gardeners but do remove certain competitive plants, as we don't use any herbicides.

What one piece of advice would you give to someone wanting to transform their own garden?

Don't completely lose sight of the functionality of your wildlife-enhanced garden. It's your living space too. Neater zones such as mown paths and lawns will offset the wilder areas and help show them off. We want our garden to look purposeful, so that it's clear the wildness isn't due to accident or laziness. It most certainly isn't the latter!

“Neater zones such as mown paths and lawns will offset the wilder areas and help show them off.”

Janina's Top Meadow Tips

Lower the soil fertility.

Meadow plants will thrive with low fertility, but the unwanted coarse grasses can't.

Sow yellow rattle.

The 'meadow maker'. It takes nutrients from the coarse grasses' roots.

Cut the meadow.

But only once the flowers have all set seed. At first by hand, then using a mower.

Meadow creation takes time.

If you are patient and follow simple guidelines, it will get better year by year. Remove the cuttings, too!




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!



Email: info@lrwt.org.uk

Right Tree Right Place

When it comes to tackling the climate crisis, sometimes it's hard to see the wood for the trees, as Barnaby Coupe explores...



For many people, trees and woodlands are emblematic of our deepest connections with nature. They are a constant in our culture and histories, from the Hundred Acre Wood to the adventures of Robin Hood, and with good reason. Our native woodlands are vibrant, wild, and shrouded in mystery — the perfect place for nature to thrive.

Ancient native woodlands in particular hold a wealth of life, with a complex weave of ecological networks and relationships between a huge array of diverse species. For example, the mighty oak, a staple of British woods, provides habitat for more than 2,300 species, from woodland birds to fungi. These long-standing woodlands also possess trees of varying ages, with old trees offering nest holes for birds like redstarts and pied flycatchers, dead and dying trees providing essential habitat for fungi and insects like stag beetles, and young trees and dense, thorny scrub creating nesting sites for warblers and nightingales. Stag beetles and nightingales, amongst other benefiting wildlife, are some of the most threatened species in the UK, so having wilder, natural woodlands which contain these habitats are critical for their continued survival.

Yet as we are now seeing the impacts of a changing climate, our woodlands are receiving increased interest in another of their magical properties — the ability to take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and lock it away for centuries in their branches, their roots, and within the soil. As a result, trees have increasingly been put forward as a win-win solution for nature and the climate, but are trees always a silver bullet? →

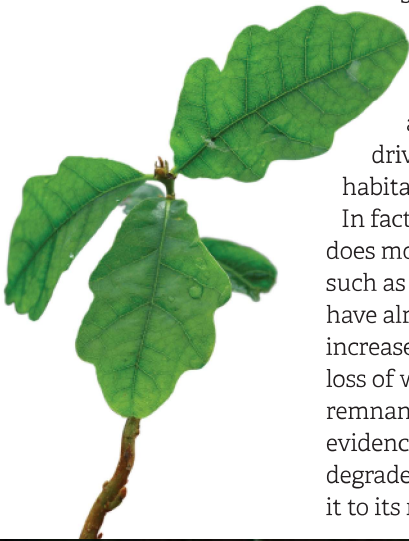


Many birds, like pied flycatchers, depend on diverse, native woodlands

Heroic habitats

While important, trees are not the only answer to solving the climate crisis. Habitats such as chalk downland, hay meadows, peatlands, and heathland all have extraordinary value for wildlife and will play a large role in addressing the climate crisis too. Yet, in the drive to plant more trees, it is precisely these habitats that can be put at risk.

In fact, planting trees on the above habitats often does more harm than good. Trees planted on habitats such as our flower-filled meadows, most of which have already vanished in the past century due to increased agricultural intensification, can lead to a loss of wildlife, and further threaten the precious remnants that remain. Yet this bias for trees exists, as evidenced in a recent decision to replant an area of degraded heathland with conifers rather than restore it to its natural state.



Shallow peat soil is particularly at risk from tree planting, and creating new woodlands in these areas can release more CO₂ than the trees end up taking in through soil degradation. Multiple examples of this were seen in the mid-20th century, when vast areas of peatland were drained, ploughed, and assailed with single-species plantations of non-native conifers in a short-sighted bid to increase timber resources.

Right tree, right place

It is key that decisions as to where and what to plant are only made after careful consideration of the impact on existing local habitats or species known to be present, and the impact of climate change on the suitability of what to plant. When creating new woodlands, it has to be the right tree, in the right place, working with the environment around it.

John Bristow, LRWT Conservation Officer explains;



Fallen trees can provide an essential habitat for beetles



Jays play a vital role in natural regeneration, carrying away acorns and caching them in the ground



Barnaby Coupe is the Land Use Policy Manager at The Wildlife Trusts and leads on the development of tree and woodland policy.

“Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust went through this process recently whilst designing a new woodland planting scheme due to start this autumn at Holwell Reserves. When it came to choosing what to plant, the first step was to look to what was already growing locally particularly as the project aims to connect smaller, fragmented areas of existing woodland habitat. However, with the prospect of climate change on the horizon, thought also had to be given as to what species of tree could cope with the projected changes.”

Wildier woodlands

Of course, one way to get around the issue of where to plant trees is to let trees plant themselves. After all, planting trees does not create a woodland. Forests are diverse and dynamic environments which have developed over years, decades, and millennia. Their complex ecological networks are both above ground and within the soils, involving a huge array of interdependent relationships between many species. And these systems were operating long before the development of wooden stakes and plastic tree guards.

Natural regeneration is the best way of creating new, natural, and wildier woodlands for wildlife. This is particularly powerful when expanding ancient semi-natural woodland, as it allows the expansion of the entire woodland ecosystem, where new saplings can take advantage of symbiotic relationships with networks of fungi in the soil. With time and patience, this can result in stunning woodlands for wildlife, such as Brampton Wood in Cambridgeshire.

Not only is it more cost effective than planting, but natural regeneration is also the best way of creating woodlands that are resilient to a changing climate. It allows these habitats to develop a dynamic age-structure, genetic variation, and associated ecologies, where trees that grow to maturity will be best suited to their local micro-climatic conditions, such as soil type,



- If you are considering planting a tree in your own garden or pursuing a small woodland creation project, check out our guide to tree planting at wildlifetrusts.org/plant-a-tree
- If you're considering a larger woodland creation project, then check out our guidance on suitable sites for tree planting at wtru.st/tree-chart
- You can also get in touch with your nearest Wildlife Trust who can help with any specific queries you may have when considering how best to go about a new tree planting project.



water availability, and sunlight. All of this makes them more resilient to external pest and disease threats.

A nuanced approach

Now, natural regeneration won't be possible everywhere, and in some locations it will need a great deal of support to get going. It is clear that expanding the UK's network of native tree and woodland cover will have a huge role to play in rebuilding ecological networks, delivering nature's recovery, and tackling the climate crisis, and if we are to increase woodland cover in this country significantly then we will need to look at planting more trees.

But we must not forget about the other habitats across the UK. Restoring the UK's peatlands will be critical to meeting our climate ambitions, and the protection and restoration of our other threatened habitats are crucial if we are to bend the curve on biodiversity loss. A nuanced approach is required, one which creates more, bigger, better, and more joined-up woodlands, hedgerows, trees and scrub thriving with wildlife and accessible to people, while also ensuring protection of other vital habitats where tree planting may be more damaging than helpful. 🌱



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.



Wild Walks

We are delighted to offer Wild Walks around Leicestershire and Rutland at our beautiful nature reserves. Be guided by our expert conservation staff, learn new skills and tips for identification, meet like-minded and enthusiastic people, and soak up nature.

Booking essential - visit lrwt.org.uk/events to book your place!

Tues 6 Sept, 7.30pm-9.30pm

Bat walk

Narborough Bog with Andy Neilson

An evening walk around Narborough Bog to discover the bats, the habitats and their behaviour.

Wed 26 Oct, 10.30am-12.30pm

Managing Rutland Water walk

Rutland Water with Joe Davis

An afternoon walk around Rutland Water Nature Reserve to learn about how we manage the reserve for wildlife.

Wed 16 Nov, 10am-12pm

Winter waders walk

Cossington Meadows with Chris Hill

A walk around Cossington Meadows to discover the birds on the reserve in the winter.

Tue 13 Dec, 10am-12.30pm

Winter Woodland Walk

Launde Park Wood with Andy Neilson

Discover the wildlife present at this ancient woodland during winter.

Fri 20 Jan, 10am-12pm

Winter tree ID walk

Rutland Water with Tim Sexton

Join us for a walk around Rutland Water Nature Reserve to learn how to identify different winter tree species.



Events and Activities

September 2022 - January 2023

Check online
Our full events programme is available online!



Our full events programme is available at: 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

One of our greatest strengths is our network of Local Groups, who represent LRWT and the wildlife of Leicestershire and Rutland in their local community. Events are held online and in person, new ones will be added, check our website for more details: lrwt.org.uk/local-groups.

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 £4/person. Contact Bruce White on 01858 467976.

Melton Mowbray Local Group

Indoor meetings: United Reformed Church, 2 Chapel St, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1LZ. Admission £1.50/members £2/non-members. 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

Indoor meetings: Oasis Suite, Oadby Baptist Church, Leicester Rd, Oadby, LE2 5BD. Admission £4/person. Contact Stuart Mucklejohn on 0116 281 0835, owgroup.lrwt@gmail.com.

Rutland Local Group

Indoor meetings: Volunteer Training Centre, off Oakham Road, Hambleton. Contact Becky Howard on 07908 252271.

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Meetings held online via Zoom. Contact Dr David Duckett on 0116 259 7231, info@badgergroup.org.uk.

Join your local group

Our local groups are the voice of wildlife and wild places at a truly local, community level. They offer a range of talks, walks and events for people of all ages to get involved with, and it's a great opportunity to meet like-minded people who share a passion for nature. Find out more at lrwt.org.uk/local-groups.

Save the date! LRWT AGM

Tuesday 22nd 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. More details about the event will be sent to members in October via email and with your copy of the Annual Review. To make sure you don't miss anything, it is important that we have your email address. Please contact the Membership Team at membership@lrwt.org.uk to update your contact details. Further information will also be available online from October at lrwt.org.uk/agm

SEPTEMBER

Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group

Sat 10 Sept, 7pm

Walk at Lyndon Nature Reserve

Rutland Water, LE15 8RN

North West Group

Fri 16 Sept, 7.30pm

Bees with David McDowell

An Ashby bee farmer describes his work, the life of a bee and honey!

Great Bowden Group

Wed 21 Sept, 7.30pm

A birder's Year: Autumn & Winter with Bruce White

A look at some of the birds, wildlife and places visited during the two seasons.

OCTOBER

Melton Mowbray Group

Mon 10 Oct, 7.30pm

Metal Detecting with John Cook

Learn about some amazing discoveries through metal detecting.

Great Bowden Group

Wed 19 Oct, 7.30pm

What the Ospreys have done for me with Hilary Hearnshaw

An illustrated talk about ospreys.

North West Group

Fri 21 Oct, 7.30pm

Through the seasons with Baz Forgham

A kaleidoscope of the four seasons across LRWT reserves.

Oadby & Wigston Group

Fri 28 Oct, 7.30pm

Discovery of the Rutland Sea Dragon with Joe Davis

Find out about the exciting discovery of the world's largest ichthyosaur at Rutland Water.

NOVEMBER

Melton Mowbray Group

Mon 14 Nov, 7.30pm

Wildlife of the Falklands with Gianpiero Ferrari

An illustrated talk about the wonderful wildlife of the Falklands.

Great Bowden Group

Wed 16 Nov, 7.30pm

Speaker TBC

More details to follow, check online.

North West Group

Fri 18 Nov, 7.30pm

Derbyshire Bats with Bill Cove

A walk along the canal and through the furnace plantation.

Oadby & Wigston Group

Fri 25 Nov, 7.30pm

The Rutland Ospreys with Alan Herbert

A talk on the Rutland Osprey Project.

DECEMBER

Melton Mowbray Group

Mon 12 Dec, 7.30pm

Member's Evening

A social get together for members of the group.

North West Group

Fri 16 Dec, 7pm

AGM & talk on Birds of the National Forest, with Martin Vaughan

A new portfolio with a behind the scenes look at the stories behind the photos.

JANUARY

North West Group

Sun 1 Jan, 1pm

New Year's Walk at Swadlincote Woodlands

Blow away the cobwebs and enjoy the variety of habitats at this beautiful woodlands. Meet in car park opposite Swadlincote Ski Centre.

Melton Mowbray Group

Mon 9 Jan, 7.30pm

What a Wonderful World with Richard Adams

A talk about the fascinating wildlife that inhabits our world.

North West Group

Fri 20 Jan, 7.30pm

Wildlife gardening with Phil Lee

How we should be improving our gardens to help wildlife.



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: 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

Or contact Helen for further details hfairhead@lrwt.org.uk



Get involved with...

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 or call 01572 737378.





Wildlife Watch Members Hub

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

Find out more:

lrwt.org.uk/family-members

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 do Hedgehog and Kestrel Award activities at home. See the Members Hub for more information.

Wildlife Watch Events

See lrwt.org.uk/family-events to book Wildlife Watch events.

Sun 25 September

Wildlife Watch Family Experience - Members Only (postponed from July) Wild Autumn at Cossington Meadows

Go wild this autumn and join us for minibeast hunting, pebble painting and an activity trail round Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve.

Booking essential, members only.

Booking password will be sent in Family E-News or email ww@lrwt.org.uk

October Half Term

Stay wild during half term with our downloadable Autumn Wild Play pack full of activities to get children outdoors experiencing nature.

Details will be sent in the October Family E-News

December Events

Dates TBC for Winter Wild Play.

Wildlife Watch News

Summer of Wild Play

Once again, children from Leicester and Hinckley and Bosworth explored local wild spaces through our Wild Play sessions. Over 100 children and their families discovered mini beasts and pond creatures, learnt how to light a fire safely, toasted marshmallows, built dens and had fun in nature.

Parents said:

"These sessions are great to get the children outdoors and in nature"

"We look out each year for these sessions, as they are always so much fun!"

The sessions at Burbage Common were run in partnership with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.



Splish, splash, splish!

This spring and summer the Education Team got over 100 families experiencing the Saffron Brook, which runs through the south of the city into the River Soar. With our Home Educated Forest School groups at Knighton Park and Wild Play school holiday sessions, children got to make natural rafts and discover what lives in the brook by stream dipping.

One attendee said:

"Enjoyed the session today with my grandson. He really enjoyed the information and the pond dipping"

This was part of Leicester City Council's Saving the Saffron Brook project funded by Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

Flower Power

With support from the Wild Flower Society, we offered sessions to families to discover the wonders of wild flowers and why they are important. Our Wildlife Watch groups used identification keys to identify plants on walks at Rutland Water and Attenborough Arboretum. One group even tasted a few wild plants such as making cleaver juice.

At the summer Flower Power Wild Play sessions, children and families identified wild flowers through flower shape, learnt common wild flower names and made paint from dandelions and other common flowers.

(All activities carried out with adult supervision and knowledge of safe plants)





Make wildlife your business

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

We appreciate the support of businesses of all sizes and sectors who recognise the importance of protecting the natural world. By working in partnership, we can achieve more for wildlife and bring more people closer to nature.



To find out how you can work with us to help nature thrive go to lrwt.org.uk/corporate or get in touch at info@lrwt.org.uk



Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust