

Wild

Membership magazine

Summer 2025

Leicestershire and Rutland

Get out there!

Our top picks of where
to admire stunning
wildlife this summer

PURPLE REIGN

Find out about the kings
and queens of British
wild flowers

WATER WORLDS

The magic of ponds and why
you need one in your garden



**Leicestershire
& Rutland**
Wildlife Trust



Welcome

Water wins for wildlife



With longer days ahead, now's the perfect time to explore our amazing nature reserves. It's in summer that we see the benefits of all the hard work that went on over winter, much of it completed by our incredible volunteers.

Volunteering is the backbone of our organisation, from helping to manage our sites, to assisting with events. On page 5 you can read about the remarkable 50 years that the Holwell Group has worked to manage this reserve – an astounding achievement.

We recently recruited a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator to help support our volunteers and those wishing to start. Please get in contact if this interests you, as it's a great way to help nature, meet new people and get outdoors.

Having begun my career as a biologist with the National Rivers Authority, water and its crucial role for wildlife has always been a passion of mine. In this issue we look at its importance on some of our reserves and offer inspiration to incorporate a pond in your own garden. A few years ago, I dug a small pond with my children and today it's full of life, with dragonflies and damselflies and plenty of newts – even great crested ones!

Rutland Water celebrates its 50th anniversary next year. Since the nature reserve was created it has attained international importance for conservation. You can read about the water testing we do there from page 16.

Another major water-related project we are excited to be a part of is the Restoring the Soar project in Leicester. The project will help local people benefit from the nature found around the river, while restoring an area previously neglected for wildlife. It is truly wonderful to see initiatives like this improving water in our counties and encouraging people to enjoy it.

I hope you have a great summer and enjoy all the wildlife around.

Mat Carter

CEO



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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.

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Join one of our events and feed your wild side.

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Local groups Join one of our friendly local groups and make a difference for wildlife near you.
lrwt.org.uk/local-groups

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

Volunteer Could you offer your skills and time to help look after local wildlife? We would love to hear from you.
lrwt.org.uk/volunteer

Wildlife Watch Upgrade to a family membership to include junior membership, Wildlife Watch.
lrwt.org.uk/join/family-membership

Donate Help us protect the wild spaces of Leicestershire and Rutland by donating to our appeals.
lrwt.org.uk/appeals

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

WILD NEWS

All the latest local and national news from The Wildlife Trusts

100,000 hours... and counting

The Holwell Wildlife Group celebrates 50 years of selfless contribution to local wildlife.



Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Trust, freely contributing their time, energy, skills and enthusiasm. We are very lucky to have such an incredible band of wonderful people!

One example of the many volunteer groups across the Trust is the Holwell Wildlife Group, who help us maintain Holwell Reserves. The group, established in 1974, has just celebrated a remarkable 50 years of service and continues to run regular work parties and lead events.

Habitat management at Holwell includes activities such as removing scrub and invasive species from the limestone grassland, mowing and raking to improve conditions for wild flowers, maintaining the entrances to nationally significant bat roosting areas, and protecting the valuable geological features found at the reserve. Volunteers also maintain access and security at the site, mowing paths and repairing fences and gateways as necessary, as well as

running events such as guided walks and an annual open day (see page 34).

The total contribution of the volunteers at Holwell over the past half century is staggering. A conservative estimate puts the total volunteer time over this period at more than 100,000 hours, with massive contributions made towards protecting local wildlife. Their continued efforts help to keep the

reserve looking fantastic and open to all for their enjoyment.

Thank you to the Holwell Wildlife Group – and all volunteers – for their invaluable commitment.

Can you help?

Your local Wildlife Trust needs you! We are looking to bring together a pool of volunteers to help with our events. The events may be anything from helping to represent the Trust at a community or business function, going on guided walks, delivering leaflets, making tea at supporter events, or helping with craft activities.

If you are happy to be involved, thank you! We will add your name to the pool and contact everyone on the list about upcoming events you can help with. For more information, please call us on 0116 262998, email volunteering@lrwt.org.uk or visit lrwt.org.uk/volunteer-opportunities to find out more.





Soaring high

Plans to improve the River Soar in Leicester have received a funding boost of more than £500,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The grant will help to establish Restoring the Soar, a new partnership between the Trust, Leicester City Council and the Canal and River Trust, who are joining forces to develop plans to enhance the river corridor from West Bridge, near the city centre, out to Watermead Park.

Over the coming months, following consultation sessions with local people, the project team hopes to develop plans

to improve the river and its surrounding habitats, as well as explore ideas to help preserve some of the built heritage along the river and investigate options to create new facilities for visitors to the riverside.

“Through this project, we’ll aim to bring communities together to help nature flourish where people live and work and put nature firmly into recovery along a strategically important wildlife corridor,” explains Ben Devine, the Trust’s Head of Nature Recovery.

To find out more about plans for the project please email nature.conservation@leicester.gov.uk

Thieves foiled

Many of you will have read about the shocking damage caused by thieves attempting to steal specialist equipment from our Volunteer Training Centre at Rutland Water last autumn. The break in caused more than £40,000 in damage and set vital work back by months.

Following this shameful incident we have upgraded security on site. The damage has been cleared away and debris removed from the wildflower meadow, which we hope will once again bloom in all its glory this summer. It’s very much back to business as usual for staff and volunteers. We really appreciate all of the kind donations and support we have received in helping us recover.



Burnt out equipment abandoned in the attempt.

Well done Fee – you’re our superstar!

Congratulations to Fee Worton, our Nextdoor Nature Community Organiser, who has been awarded the prestigious Marsh Award for Outstanding Public Engagement for her work connecting communities in Leicester with nature.

The Marsh Charitable Trust celebrates those in the charity sector who go above and beyond. In partnership with The Marsh Charitable Trust, The Wildlife Trusts’ Marsh Awards honours volunteers and staff making an exceptional contribution to conservation.

Fee was recognised for her passion

and energy, inspiring people who might otherwise feel disconnected from nature or powerless to make a difference in conservation.

With a constant smile and boundless determination, Fee has built strong relationships with more than 20 organisations and 11 community groups, reaching more than 5,000 people through events and activities in Leicester.



Did you know?

It’s almost 70 years since the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust was founded! In 1956 we began our work as the Leicestershire and Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation and have since grown to become the leading local wildlife conservation charity, working hard to protect and enhance the wildlife and wild places of our counties. Thank you for your support!



Share your thoughts We value your opinion and would love to know what works for you, and what doesn’t. With this in mind, we are running an online survey and welcome your input. Please share your interests, what you’d like to see in the magazine, and what you want from your membership. Let us know your thoughts at lrwt.org.uk/member-survey



LRWT NEWS

Become a hoverfly hero!

These often-colourful pollinators are an essential part of any thriving, wildlife-filled garden. But the humble hoverfly needs our help.

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) are calling on gardeners across our two counties to help save hoverflies. This fly family is the second most significant pollinator after bees. In fact, some species of hoverfly are known to visit more flowers than bees!

These insects are the unsung heroes of many of our ecosystems. Hoverflies visit 72% of crops globally, which they either pollinate or protect by eating sap-sucking aphids. Furthermore, they pollinate wild flowers, are food for birds, and even help break down organic matter in gardens.

Yet intensive agriculture, harmful pesticides, urban development and climate change have all taken their toll. Hoverfly distribution saw a staggering 44% decline between 1980 to 2020, and in 2022 the International Union for the Conservation of Nature added hoverflies to its Red List of threatened species.

Hoverflies are masters of disguise. These stingless insects are often mistaken for wasps, bees or even hornets, while the different types go by sometimes extraordinary common names such as Batman, The Footballer, and Marmalade, thanks to their distinctive markings and colours.

True flies have only one pair of flight wings, whereas bees and wasps have two.

Hoverflies make up more than 280 of the 6,000 fly species in the UK. It can be easier to identify them by their behaviour than their looks, because they hover or even zigzag around plants.

Hoverflies are a tiny but essential part of the natural world. They thrive in well-managed woodlands and wetlands, but there is also a lot we can do in our gardens to help. Providing a range of flowers to feed on through the year, ponds for larvae to grow in, dead wood to lay eggs in and even a few aphid pests for them to feed on, and you will have these gardeners' friends for life.

Other potential projects for gardeners to help hoverflies in spaces large or small include: planting up pollinator-friendly tubs of nectar-rich flowers to suit the season, offering a buffet for visiting hoverflies; creating 'hoverfly lagoons' – pools of shallow water where fallen leaves create a perfect breeding ground for many of the hoverfly species which have aquatic larvae; or setting up nurseries of log piles and shrubs as homes for hoverfly larvae.



Find out which hoverflies are visiting your garden and how you can help save this species by heading to wildaboutgardens.org.uk



Shrubs and log piles offer a safe space for hoverfly larvae.

THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS



Hovering by

Hoverflies are a common sight in summertime gardens. See if you can spot these fly-by visitors.



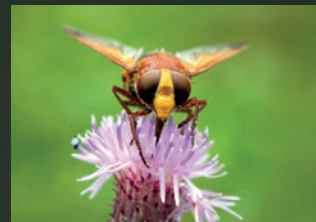
FRANK PORCH

Batman hoverfly: So-called because of the black markings behind its head, which resemble the Batman logo.



FRANK PORCH

Bumblebee mimic hoverfly: This fuzzy master of mimicry looks almost indecipherable from an actual bumblebee!



JON HAWKINS/SURREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

Hornet mimic hoverfly: It might look like a hornet, but is completely harmless. Its impersonation protects it from predators.



VAUGHN MATTHEWS

Marsh hoverfly: This striped sun lover goes by many names, including the sun fly and, our favourite, 'The Footballer'!

News from #teamWILDER

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

Fantastic fundraisers!

We are incredibly grateful to all our superstar fundraisers who go above and beyond to raise extra money for the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. Every amount raised, however big or small, really helps to make a difference, giving us more resources to protect and enhance local wildlife.

Zoe Goddard, aged eight, offers a brilliant example of some of the ingenious ways people help us fundraise. Zoe raised £50 by selling her own beautiful handmade loomband jewellery at the Desford Scarecrow Festival.

"I made different patterns and styles throughout the summer to get ready," explains Zoe. "I made lots of bracelets, rings and necklaces, and made a sign that told people what the Wildlife Trust does and why it is important. I hope the money helps protect animals."

What an inspiration you are Zoe! Thank you for all your hard work.

Another of our amazing fundraisers is regular litter picker Sam Laywood of the North Leicestershire Litter Wombles, who recently won a Keep Britain Tidy Award for being a local litter hero! Last March Sam completed a sponsored litter picking marathon, collecting 34 bags of rubbish as he walked from north to south Leicestershire – all while raising £2,200 for the Trust! At the time of going to press Sam had just completed another charity clear-up, this time from the west of the county to the east, litter picking a route from Newbold Verdon to Tugby.

Sam's efforts not only raise additional, much-needed money for the Trust, they also help to clear litter that might otherwise harm local wildlife and pollute watercourses.



Superstar: Zoe with her handmade loombands.



Sam Laywood kicks off last spring's litter picking marathon.

Fundraise for us

You too can raise money for wildlife! From taking part in a sponsored run to organising an afternoon tea party, there are many ways you can help raise funds in aid of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

Looking for ideas and guidance to get started? Then download our fundraising pack. Whatever you decide to do, we can offer friendly advice and keep you updated with how your fundraising helps local wildlife. Download your pack at: lrwt.org.uk/fundraise

Or maybe you have an adventurous streak and fancy doing something a little bit different – perhaps taking on a trek, rafting, or even a skydive! Challenge yourself to make a difference while making a positive impact for wildlife across our counties: lrwt.org.uk/fundraise/take-challenge



UK NEWS

UK UPDATE

Simonside, on The Rothbury Estate, is set to become a flagship site for nature conservation in the UK.

Securing The Rothbury Estate for nature

The Wildlife Trusts have purchased part of the Rothbury Estate in partnership with Northumberland Wildlife Trust and have launched a £30 million appeal to secure the entire estate – for nature and the nation. The charities have agreed a two-phase purchase agreement over two years.

The charities will consult the local community on plans to buy and care for the largest piece of contiguous land to be on the market anywhere in England for the last 30 years and create a showcase for nature recovery on a vast scale.

The 3,800-hectare estate has an important place in the hearts of Northumbrians. By acquiring The Rothbury Estate, Northumberland Wildlife Trust aims to enhance the rich natural heritage of the estate for future generations. A successful purchase of the entire site will avoid the land being broken up into multiple ownerships, helping to ensure public access and create a sustainable future for farmers.

The current purchase includes the Simonside Hills and a mixture of

lowland, woods, riverside and farmland – the western side of the Estate – an area that is especially valued by the urban communities of Newcastle Upon Tyne and Tyneside. Notable wildlife includes curlews, red grouse, merlins, cuckoos, mountain bumblebees, emperor moths and red squirrels.

Mike Pratt, chief executive of Northumberland Wildlife Trust, says:

"We're very excited to be part of a once-in-a-generation opportunity for securing a stunning area of countryside where people and nature can thrive side by side. It signals the start of something unique in Northumberland and it will also have impact on a national scale. We're looking forward to working with local people to create an exemplar of how nature, farming and community are integrated – something local people can feel immensely proud of."

"We'll be talking and listening to people who live and work in the area over the coming months to evolve a long-term plan for the estate that respects its traditions and the livelihoods that depend on it. We will preserve and enhance public access and recreational

opportunities to allow people to enjoy this wonderful place."

Craig Bennett, chief executive of The Wildlife Trusts, adds:

"This is a thrilling moment for The Wildlife Trusts who are working collectively – coming together from across the UK – to create a national flagship for nature recovery for the very first time. It's a historic moment for our federation."

"The Rothbury Estate will come to play a key role in revitalising local economies, delivering multiple societal and environmental benefits – and it'll provide the most amazing example for the rest of the country on a scale not seen before. We're all absolutely delighted to be part of securing this precious piece of natural heritage for the nation and we want to hear from everyone who is keen to support our appeal."

Find out more about how you can support The Wildlife Trusts to secure the entire estate by visiting wildlifetrusts.org/appeals/rothbury-estate-nature-and-nation

UK UPDATE

2024 marine review

People power marine recovery projects

Innovation, new research and a whale-sized volunteering effort have helped The Wildlife Trusts' learn more about changes in UK seas in the 2024 marine review.

Seaside volunteers clocked over 12,000 hours backing wildlife initiatives around UK shores. This included recording sightings of humpback whales, white-beaked dolphins and climate-indicator species including colourful sea slugs and mauve jellyfish. The data helps experts understand more about how species are faring in busy seas and the impact of climate change on marine wildlife.

Volunteers tallied thousands of hours identifying and recording wildlife through the national citizen science survey, Shoresearch and volunteering days organised by Wildlife Trusts. Data collected helps experts monitor how pollution, climate change and invasive

species are impacting UK wildlife. 2024 surveys highlight the spread and occurrence of non-native species and climate change indicators, such as the first record of the kelp seaweed, Wakame at Wembury in Devon, also found at Torquay and Brixham.

Volunteers also gathered almost 3,000 kilograms of rubbish by hand from UK beaches on clean-ups organised by Wildlife Trusts. With under 10 per cent of UK seas protected from the most damaging fishing activities, The Wildlife Trusts urge policymakers to do more to save our seas. Find out how you can join the volunteer effort: wildlifetrusts.org/closer-to-nature/volunteer



UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK.



1 Celebrating seal pups

Cumbria Wildlife Trust is celebrating seal pups born at its coastal nature reserve at South Walney near Barrow for the 10th year running. The growth of the grey seal colony from single figures in the 1980s and 90s to over 500 since breeding began in 2015 is a great conservation success story. wtru.st/Cumbria-seal-pups

2 Landscape revival

The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust has been awarded over £500,000 to restore nature across the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire landscape, in partnership with 11 organisations. The National Lottery Heritage Fund grant supports a project to engage species recovery across the Bernwood, Otmoor and the River Ray region stretching east from Oxford and Bicester.



3 Pine martens return

15 pine martens were released at secret locations on Dartmoor after a 100-year absence. After two years of meticulous planning and consultation with local communities, the reintroduction, led by Devon Wildlife Trust and seven partners, is an historic step in the restoration of the region's woodlands and wildlife. wtru.st/pine-martens-return



Temperate rainforests will feature in The Wildlife Trusts' garden at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Bringing the rainforest to RHS Chelsea Flower Show

The Wildlife Trusts are bringing rainforests to RHS Chelsea Flower Show! The British Rainforest Garden, designed by award-winning Zoe Claymore and sponsored by Project Giving Back, will evoke the lush, wet woodlands that once swathed vast areas of the west coast of the British Isles. By bringing the enchantment of temperate rainforests to Chelsea, we hope to inspire people to support the restoration of this threatened habitat and show how

nature-friendly gardening can help British wildlife thrive.

Inspired by the ambitious 100-year mission of The Wildlife Trusts and Aviva to bring rainforests back to the British Isles, the garden will share the story of this precious habitat that once blanketed a fifth of our country and is now so rare that it only covers about 1% of the land. Restoring them will create beautiful places for people to enjoy, help wildlife recover and tackle climate change.



Liz Bonnin

  @lizbonnin

We are nature



I've been incredibly lucky to have had wildlife encounters that left me feeling deeply connected to nature. Some of the most memorable were in the Galápagos Islands. This remote, volcanic archipelago and its nutrient-rich waters have produced a magnificent abundance of life. Marine iguanas, fur seals and blue-footed boobies are entirely unphased by your presence here, so you feel like part of nature, not just an observer. In the water, I've spent hours playing with enigmatic sea lions as they invite you to chase them.

In the UK, one of my favourite wild places is Loch of the Lowes in Scotland – a truly magical place. For me it's just as thrilling to see signs of beavers around the Loch, from coppiced vegetation to beaver chips, as it is to see them with my own eyes. It's wonderful to witness these crucial ecosystem engineers recovering here and across the UK, after being hunted to extinction in the 16th Century.

But in my work, I've also seen how nature is bowing under the pressures of the modern world. I've reported on mile-long rafts of waste flowing down the Citarum River in Indonesia, made up of plastic sent 'away' by the West, and of thousands of sachets sold by global corporations – despite developing countries having no recycling infrastructure to deal with it. This was one of the most eye-opening moments of my career. Our unrestrained cycles of production and consumption in the global north, and our throwaway culture, are all destroying nature, that we need to survive.

Every species on earth has evolved over millions of years to carry out a function that maintains the health of ecosystems. And ecosystems, in turn, keep the planet healthy,

as part of the interconnected web of life. We humans have a role to play too, but many of us have become so disconnected from nature that we've forgotten this simple truth.

To turn things around, we must place nature at the heart of every decision, across all sectors of society. It's encouraging that ecological economists are working to transform our economic model, so that nature and societal well-being are prioritised above profits. I'm also bolstered by the traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous communities, who live in harmony with nature. This crucial knowledge system, combined with western conservation practices, can deliver better, collaborative outcomes for people and nature.

Collaboration is our superpower, and this is equally true of The Wildlife Trusts. Our collective strength as a federation of 46 Wildlife Trusts knows no bounds! The more we collaborate and combine our knowledge and experience, the faster the ripple effect of change can flow. As part of our community, you can play a very real part in the change our planet needs, by sharing our stories, supporting our campaigns and volunteering with us. Lastly, perhaps most importantly, in these challenging times, my advice is to take a break from the news and get outside. Notice the sunlight through the trees, the sound of birds, and breathe. Connect with nature and everything else follows.

In late 2024, Liz Bonnin interviewed Nemonte Nenquimo, a climate leader who has dedicated her life to defending Indigenous ancestral territory and cultural survival in the Amazon.



Watch the interview over on the Wildlife Trusts' YouTube channel: [wtru.st/Liz-Bonnin-interview](https://www.wtru.st/Liz-Bonnin-interview)



BEAVERS IN THE UK

The UK Government has officially opened the door for licensed beaver reintroductions into the wild. These ecosystem engineers will help restore rivers, boost biodiversity and reduce flooding. For the first time, applications to release beavers into English river catchments will be accepted. Read our vision for their return: www.wildlifetrusts.org/saving-species/beavers

Liz Bonnin

is an explorer, naturalist and The Wildlife Trusts' president. She is best known for documentaries including *Galapagos*, *Wild Alaska* and *Blue Planet Live*. Liz's career has taken her around the world, studying animal behaviours and shining a spotlight on important environmental issues.



Fit for purpose

At our last AGM we announced we had been completing a Governance Review throughout 2024 and into 2025. Chair of Trustees **Ann Tomlinson** shares the outcomes of this review and its role in ensuring a strong organisation.

Governance covers the overall system of processes, functions and controls that determine the way an organisation works. Having a good standard of governance is important for all undertakings, but especially so in the case of charities such as us, where our work is directed towards a defined mission and our resources are held in trust to deliver that mission.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body of the Trust is our Council of Trustees who are also directors under Company Law. The Council is ultimately responsible for the way the Trust carries out its work. It focuses on agreeing the strategy for the organisation then works with the CEO and staff to determine and assess its delivery.

Given its responsibilities, it is essential that our Council includes the right expertise, skills and qualities. Over the years we have built up an expert group of Trustees, including six new members elected to the Council at the last AGM, bringing our current Trustee count to 14. We continue to look for new members to ensure we retain that right mix of skills and numbers.

If you would like to read more about the individuals who make up our Council or understand how we are run, please visit lrwt.org.uk/how-we-are-run



Trustees on a fact-finding visit to Rutland Water Nature Reserve.

The Trust's Constitution

Our Constitution is enshrined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. We are updating these to take account of the changes in how we work, including digital technology. The revised Articles will be presented to the membership for adoption at our next AGM in November.

Policies and delegation

We have thoroughly reviewed our policies governing crucial areas of responsibility, such as health and safety, safeguarding, and data protection, to ensure they are up to date, consistent, and streamlined.

All organisations need to allow for some of the work to be delegated down from the Governing Body, for efficiency and effectiveness. Our Finance Committee is a good example of this, involving both Trustees and staff with specific financial expertise.

To assist the delivery of our 2030 Strategy, we are working to develop advisory groups on two further areas: Nature Recovery, and our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These would take a 'big picture' view, ensuring that our efforts can be focused strategically.

This governance review has been a major undertaking, guided by best practice within the charity sector. It has enabled us to conclude that our overall systems were already strong, but we also identified areas where we can take our governance up to the next level, to ensure that it continues to provide the strong support needed to deliver our mission. But a review like this can't be a one-off. As the Trust moves on, it will be important to ensure that the capabilities of our system of governance keep pace. We will be undertaking further reviews periodically.





Your wild summer

The best of the season's wildlife and where to enjoy it on your local patch

Wildflower meadows like Loughborough Big Meadow are managed using traditional farming methods, such as conservation grazing.

SUMMER SPECTACLE

Sweeping spectacular

Stunning horizons of wild flowers and grasses sweeping across ancient meadows will make your heart sing. Loughborough Big Meadow is one of the few Lammas meadows in England. Most of the 45-hectare site is mown for hay during June or July each year.

On Lammas Day, historically the first of August, commoners with grazing rights brought their livestock here. Now our cattle maintain this species-rich grassland, providing more food for pollinators and habitats for small mammals and birds. The meadow is the only known site in Leicestershire for narrow-leaved water-dropwort.

SEE THEM THIS SUMMER

► Loughborough Big Meadow:

Listen to soaring skylarks and admire the rich colours of dark red great burnet and golden-yellow meadow buttercup. Don't miss our Loughborough Big Meadow Botany Walk on 21 May. See page 34 for details.

► **Cribb's Meadow:** Spot green-winged and common spotted orchids, as well as grizzled skipper and green hairstreak butterflies.

Nature's guardians

As a member you are helping us restore wildflower meadows across our region. Thank you!

Dragons and damsels

Dragonflies and damselflies are insects that flew with dinosaurs.

The names of dragonfly and damselfly species – ruddy darter, vagrant emperor, and beautiful demoiselle – are part of the allure of these ephemeral flying insects. They zigzag across water, spreading or folding their colourful wings when they alight on plants. We see just the final beautiful stage of their lives as they seek a mate, breed, lay eggs and die.

Agile dragonflies have two pairs of strong, transparent wings. Each wing is flexed separately to generate thrust and direction, turn sharply, fly forwards, backwards, up and down. Damselflies have a fluttery flight and fold their two pairs of wings back when they perch.

Willow emerald damselflies have been spotted at Rutland Water. This dark metallic green damselfly favours sites where it lays its eggs in the bark of willow and alder trees overhanging still water. It is a recent arrival in the UK, possibly due to climate change.

Charnwood Lodge is another wonderful location to spot dragonflies and damselflies, and occasionally a hobby, a small falcon that flies fast enough to feed on these insects.

DID YOU KNOW?

■ **Water world:** Dragonflies and damselflies spend 90% of their lives as nymphs under water, some for up to five years.

Flights of fancy

Head to Cossington Meadows to see dragonflies and damselfies mating. The females will then lay their eggs, or oviposit, delicately onto leaves just below the water's surface. Visiting details at lrwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/cossington-meadows



■ **Numbers game:** There are more than 40 species of dragonflies and damselflies in the UK.

■ **Ancient:** Dragonfly and damselfly fossils are found in rocks from the Carboniferous period from more than 300 million years ago.

Summer showtime!

Warmer days bring plenty of opportunity to admire nature's show.

Dog days

Look for the pale pink flowers of dog rose. Each of the five petals is heart shaped.



Swallow's song

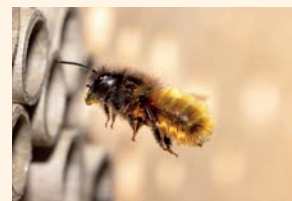
Listen for the mesmerising twitter-warble-whirr of swallows as they swoop and swerve across rivers and lakes.



JON HAWKINS

Nectar points

Watch mason bees dutifully bringing nectar to feed their eggs in the nests they have made in your bug hotel.



BEN HALL/2020VISION

Breaking bud

Love the unfurling leaves of trees casting cool shade for a woodland walk. Many trees are also flowering now.



PENNY DIXIE

Time to go wild!

Each June we set the exciting 30 Days Wild challenge, inviting everyone to do one wild thing each day. Long midsummer days give time to be outdoors, watching birds, sitting beside a pond or painting flowers. Visit lrwt.org.uk/30-days-wild to sign up for a free pack of inspiring ideas and fun information to help you, your family and friends get started. There are packs for schools too.



EVIE AND TOM PHOTOGRAPHY

DO THIS

Butterflies are vital pollinators and indicators of healthy ecosystems. Be a citizen-scientist for the Big Butterfly Count this summer: bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org

SMELL THIS

The unmistakably sweet scent of honeysuckle invites bats, bees, butterflies, moths – and us to nuzzle up to these pale yellow and rose-pink flowers.



ANDY ROUSE/2020VISION

Water worlds

It's well-known that to attract a wide variety of wildlife you just need to add water. **Tim Sexton** takes us on a deep dive into ponds.

We recognise their conservation value and across Leicestershire and Rutland there are ponds on and around many of our nature reserves. Some are natural, dating back many hundreds of years, others are man-made. From historic ponds such as the listed moat at the Old Rectory near Cossington, to ponds created through industry like those along the mineral line at Holwell, or even ponds formed in a crater caused by the controlled detonation of an unexploded bomb at Charnwood Lodge – their origins are often as curious as the species found within them!

What lies beneath

Beneath the water's surface lives a myriad of fascinating creatures. Unsurprisingly, most species associated with ponds are invertebrates. More than 3,800 species of invertebrate found in Britain spend at least part of their life in freshwater, with many providing a vital food source for other animals such as wetland birds and mammals.

At Rutland Water, the aquatic life within our ponds has been well studied through regular monitoring and other projects. Over the last 50 years, more than 80 species of caddisfly have been

recorded, 35 species of water beetle, 30 aquatic true bugs and 24 species of dragonfly and damselfly, the most recent being the willow emerald, discovered breeding here in 2021.

Along with macroinvertebrates we have also found freshwater sponges, bryozoans (simple animals with tentacles that live in colonies) and hydra – distant relatives of jellyfish and corals. Water voles now thrive following a project to reintroduce

them to the local area in 2011, and water shrews have been recorded on trail cameras throughout the site.

In addition to the eight large lagoons and main reservoir, there are 32 smaller ponds at Rutland Water, including a few ponds which were features of the landscape long before the reservoir was created. At least half of the ponds contain great-crested newts, with smooth newts found in the others.

TIM SEXTON



Bryozoans live in colonies.

TIM SEXTON



Great diving beetles are a regular pond visitor.

More ponds please

Wherever suitable, we look to create more ponds or enhance existing ones. It is generally considered that isolated ponds are less ecologically valuable than a series of ponds, as the scarce species associated with ponds typically have poor dispersal mechanisms.

Last year we created two new ponds on the Lyndon Nature Reserve at Rutland Water and improved Fran's Pond on the Egleton side of the reserve, increasing the size of the existing pond, adding two additional ponds and creating a boardwalk so visitors can look over the water at some of the inhabitants. All work for the two projects was funded by private donations.

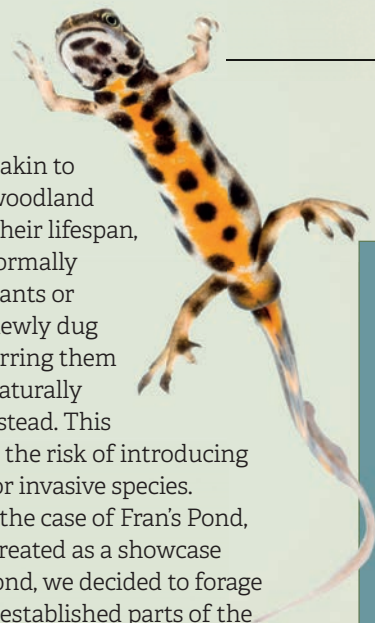
As ponds are considered a long-term



Improvements at Fran's Pond gave immediate results.

investment, akin to an ancient woodland in terms of their lifespan, we do not normally introduce plants or animals to newly dug ponds, preferring them to become naturally colonised instead. This also reduces the risk of introducing non-native or invasive species. However, in the case of Fran's Pond, which was created as a showcase dragonfly pond, we decided to forage plants from established parts of the reserve. This led to instant results, with great diving beetles being recorded over the summer and a total of 11 dragonfly and damselfly species seen laying eggs on the plants, mere months after the ponds were created!

Installing a pond can be incredibly rewarding. You don't need lots of space and something as simple as a strong plastic storage container can be planted to create features like those in a larger pond. Within days of filling a pond you will start to see the early colonisers such as lesser water boatmen, then enjoy the buzzing of dragonflies as they come to oviposit in the vegetation. Before long, you may be lucky enough to have frogs and newts move in – and all you need to do is add water.



Ponds big or small can support an extraordinary range of species.

Masters of adaptation

Some aquatic invertebrates have evolved incredible adaptations that enable them to thrive in environments typically low in dissolved oxygen.



Straw thing

The water scorpion might look like its namesake but its 'tail' is in fact a snorkel that helps it breathe. Though slow moving it is a voracious ambush predator, clinging on to vegetation and feeding on other invertebrates and even tadpoles and small fish that pass by. Once it has caught its prey, it injects a digestive enzyme that starts to dissolve it into a liquid. It then sucks up its meal with its straw-like mouthparts.



Ponds for people and wildlife

The Belgrave Community Garden Project is a shining example of what working together can achieve. Nestled beside the library in Cossington Recreation Ground, this small-but-thriving garden has become a haven for both people and wildlife thanks to a passionate group of volunteers, who are building strong community ties along the way.

The next exciting step is the creation of frog pools to further diversify local habitats. With all permissions in place, WildWater Ponds have generously donated time, resources and expertise to bring this vision to life. Pools, a stumpery, dead hedge and habitat piles will become a wildlife hotspot, demonstrating how even small-scale ponds can have a big impact. We can't wait to see the wildlife that moves in!



The new frog pools, dead hedge and stumpery under construction at the Belgrave Community Garden.

Top glass

Phantom midge larvae adults look like mosquitoes (but don't bite!), while the larvae look like see-through worms – with some interesting adaptations. Hydrostatic organs at either end of their body act as a buoyancy mechanism. At night they feed at the surface then, as daybreak nears, the larvae increase the acidity around their air sacs, which causes a band of protein to contract. With the air expelled, they slowly sink to the bottom. Despite having no legs they are keen predators, using their fused antennae, modified into a grappling hook, to capture their prey.



View over some of the lagoons at Rutland Water.

Testing times

Rutland Water's designation as an internationally important wetland means it is essential to understand water quality across the reserve. Assistant Species and Recording Officer **Beth Fox** explains how we manage this.

The lagoons at Rutland Water receive water from several sources, so we need to know how this might affect the aquatic wildlife and its potential impact on waterfowl higher up the food chain. To build a clearer picture of water quality we use the Biological Monitoring Working Party (BMWP) method, which uses aquatic invertebrates as biological indicators. The species found are scored on a scale of one to ten based on their tolerance to pollution or low oxygen levels in the water. By observing the range of aquatic invertebrates present, we can chart the effects of pollution over time.

Tracking changes in what we find serves as an early warning system, helping us detect short discharges of pollution that would otherwise be missed through chemical sampling. Additionally, this all feeds into species monitoring, where we have built up a significant baseline assessment of the aquatic invertebrates found at Rutland Water, including most recently, 18 species of lesser water boatman.



Hydrometridae, a type of water measurer.



Volunteers are an essential part of the surveying program.

How we take samples

Samples are taken with a pond net at a specific location over three minutes, followed by a one-minute surface search for invertebrates like pond skaters or whirligig beetles that may not be caught in the net. At each sample point, we try to divide our time equally between each mesohabitat, with maybe one minute in a marginal area of the lagoon, one minute within a densely reeded area, and the final minute in a slightly deeper section of open water. This ensures the sample is a good

representation of the overall location.

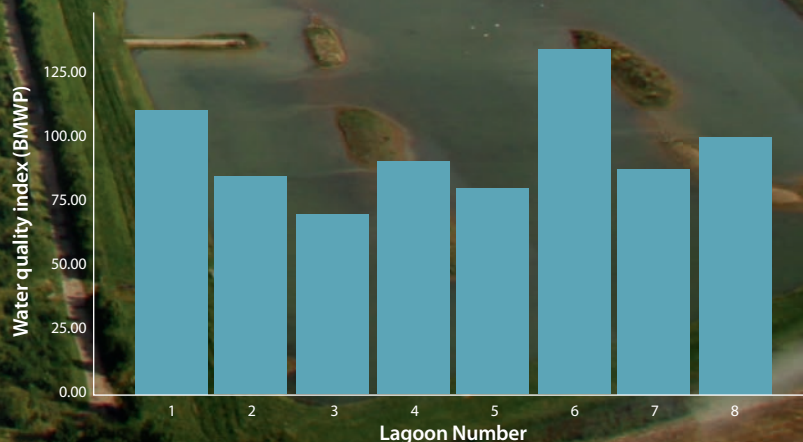
The sample is then taken to the bank side and sorted in trays, where all macroinvertebrates (invertebrates visible without a magnifying glass) are identified to family level and noted on a score sheet. Lower scoring species are those that are more tolerant to low oxygen levels in the water, such as fly larvae, leeches and snails. Higher scoring species include those from dragonfly, mayfly, caddisfly and stonefly families, which are more sensitive to changes in water quality.

This whole process takes up to two hours per sample, ensuring that nothing hiding amongst vegetation in the tray is left out. The final total of all the aquatic invertebrates identified gives us the 'BMWP score', which we can then use to build up a picture of the biological condition of the water body.

Each lagoon at Rutland Water is sampled multiple times around different points to be sure that the entire area is covered. This is important as it helps to build a balanced overview of the whole waterbody. Highly vegetated areas, for

BMWP scores and their interpretation

BMWP Score	Category	Interpretation
0-10	Very Poor	Heavily polluted
11-40	Poor	Polluted or impacted
41-70	Moderate	Moderately impacted
71-100	Good	Clean but slightly impacted
>100	Very Good	Unpolluted, unimpacted



Tracking the changes in what we find serves as an early warning system

example, tend to have better water quality as they are more effective at filtering out pollutants. Over the last year, 81 samples were taken at 25 separate locations around the lagoons and ponds on the reserve.

Tracking trends

The bar chart summarises the overall mean BMWP score for each lagoon during the 2024 sampling season. It reveals that the highest scoring area was Lagoon 6, while the highest scoring sample came to 137. This highlights the favourable condition of this lagoon, with 28 family groups recorded, of 13 different orders, including two caddisfly families, five beetle families and seven bug families. Highlights from this sample was the speedy Mesoveliidae, a pondweed bug, and the Hydrometridae, a water measurer, both of which were firsts for the reserve.

The lowest scoring lagoon this past

year was Lagoon 3, with the lowest sample scoring 43, meaning this area has been moderately impacted. This individual sample had just 12 different family groups of eight different orders, with no caddisflies, no beetles and just two bug families, showing just how stark the invertebrate diversity is in this part of Lagoon 3 compared to the sample on Lagoon 6.

The total abundance of invertebrates is not taken into consideration in the BMWP method. However, we rate the abundances for our own records. This sample at Lagoon 3 contained high

numbers of snails (over 100 pond snails), pea mussels (between 51 and 100) and water hoglice (between 26 and 50), all of which are lower scoring species.

It is important to note that there has been a higher score of 100 on Lagoon 3, meaning other areas (especially the more densely reeded areas) are clean but slightly impacted, demonstrating the importance of taking multiple samples around a waterbody.

Looking ahead

Now that we have completed a few years of exploratory sampling, we have a good outline of the general levels of water quality across the reserve. Our next step is to standardise our sampling process, so that we can begin to properly analyse what all these results are telling us. This will enable us to effectively monitor the water quality throughout the reserve.

By observing trends over time, we will be able to identify any potential issues in the waterbodies, ultimately looking out for any impacts on our overwintering waterbirds.



TIM SEXTON



Pond life

The best way to boost wildlife in your garden!

Boosting the wildlife in your garden couldn't be simpler or more exciting. What you need is a garden pond. Believe me you won't regret it, says the BBC's Justin Rowlatt.

There'll be a little digging. You need to go a bit deeper than you'd expect. Just over a metre is good. All the wonderful pond creatures that are going to make their home in your garden need somewhere to shelter away from the ice that will form in winter.

Then you'll need a pond liner, gravel, some native pond plants and aquatic compost bags. Then you just fill it with tap water and wait. This is when the magic happens.

During the first week or so your pond will go a sickly shade of green as algae makes itself at home. If you're lucky, you'll get your first creature in the second or third week. Mine was a hoglouse, a watery cousin of the woodlouse.

Next came mosquito larvae. I had loads, wriggling and squirming beneath the surface. I was transfixed

– my wife was not so impressed. But don't worry, they are the lure that is going to tempt in other creatures for whom mosquito larvae are the tastiest of treats.

The nymphs of dragonflies and damselflies can't get enough of them. Frogs and newts love them too. And if any do manage to hatch into actual mozzies, they'll be dinner for swallows, swifts and bats.

What you've created is an entire ecosystem, an intricate food web. The algae is food for the insects who are food for the frogs who are food for hedgehogs. You get the picture.

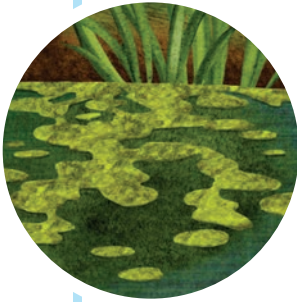
When you find yourself wondering why you are spending so long just staring at your new pond here's the answer: what is unfolding before you is nothing less than the story of life on earth.



Justin Rowlatt

is the BBC's first ever climate editor. He describes his job as reporting from the front line of climate change. Justin is also a huge fan of ponds. He put his in three years ago and hasn't looked back.





Pond algae

Learn to love your algae. It is the bottom of the food chain and without it your pond would be a lot less enticing.



Hoglouse

Hoglice are an aquatic relative of the woodlouse. And before you get sniffy about these little lice, you should know they are one of the most ancient animal species on earth at more than 300 million years old.



Rat-tailed maggot

This is one of my favourite pond creatures. Think of maggots but with snorkels attached to their bums. Except because rat-tailed maggots are aquatic, they are wonderfully clean and mutate into beautiful hoverflies.



Marsh marigolds

There are few sights more cheerful than a clump of bright yellow marsh marigolds. Think buttercups but bigger and framed by dramatic dark foliage. They provide a hiding place for frogs and nectar for insects.



Yellow flag iris

There are lots of water iris species around the world but only one real choice for UK ponds, in my opinion. The yellow flag iris, the only aquatic iris native to the UK.



Hornwort

This is one of the workhorses of a thriving pond. Hornwort is a dark green plant that floats beneath the surface releasing life-giving oxygen. But beware, just like algae, happy hornwort will grow like topsy.



Large red damselfly

On a sunny spring day there is always at least one red damselfly hovering, like a tiny helicopter, over my pond. These creatures live out their entire lives before your eyes and their nymphs Hoover up mozzie larvae.



Common frog

We have three. All slightly different colours. My wife insists she recognises each one. You'll be spellbound as they lay their spawn. The tiny black dots in the centre evolve into surprisingly rapacious tadpoles and then, majestic frogs.



Spikes of green-winged orchid flowers bring Merry's Meadows alive from May.

Discover the hidden gem of Merry's Meadows

Few of us get to experience the timeless nature of an English meadow on a regular basis, but the special wildlife of Merry's Meadows will have you returning time and again.



ANDY DEARDEN

With 97% of meadows lost to development and changes in agricultural practice, the chances of stumbling across a beautiful ancient meadow have become increasingly unlikely. But if you are prepared to seek it out, one of the finest remaining ridge and furrow meadow sites in the region is managed by the Trust.

Merry's Meadows can only be reached by parking some distance away at the top of Great Lane, just outside the village of Greetham. You've got to work for your wild flowers! The ten-minute walk required to access the site, along a muddy track, through a sea of arable

farmland and with quarrying activities and an airfield rumbling in the background, is a sign of the site's fragility and conceals the hidden gem that awaits.

The meadows

are just under 13 hectares (30 acres) in size and split into three distinct fields: Cow Pasture Close, Long Field and Donkey Paddocks. This ancient meadow is preserved thanks to continuing traditional meadow management techniques, including regular mowing and grazing and the prohibition of fertilisers and herbicides on site. This careful management helps ensure that the iconic wildflower array that Merry's boasts comes back year after year.

The main dilemma is when to visit. In fact, you'll probably want to come back multiple times in the year. Each of the spring and summer months offer something slightly different and there's some lovely surprises waiting for you in autumn too.

Entry to the reserve brings you into the first section of the meadows known as Cow Pasture Close. The smallest of the three fields, it is very clearly still ridge and furrow. After a long, grey winter, April signals the beginning of exciting changes in the meadow as the cowslips peek through. By mid-May, the first wave of wildflowers is in full flow, with the sunny yellow cowslips beautifully contrasting



Six-spot burnet moth on saw-wort.

with the emergence of thousands of purple spikes from green-winged orchids. Named for the green veins found in the 'hood' of its flowers, this short and pretty plant thrives at Merry's Meadows. In 2023, nearly 20,000 spikes were recorded across the three meadows.

Although the most prolific species of orchid at Merry's, green-winged are not the only kind you will come across. Six other species have been recorded at the meadows in varying abundance, including common and heath spotted, twayblade and frog. It's also a great site to see adder's-tongue fern, an unusual type

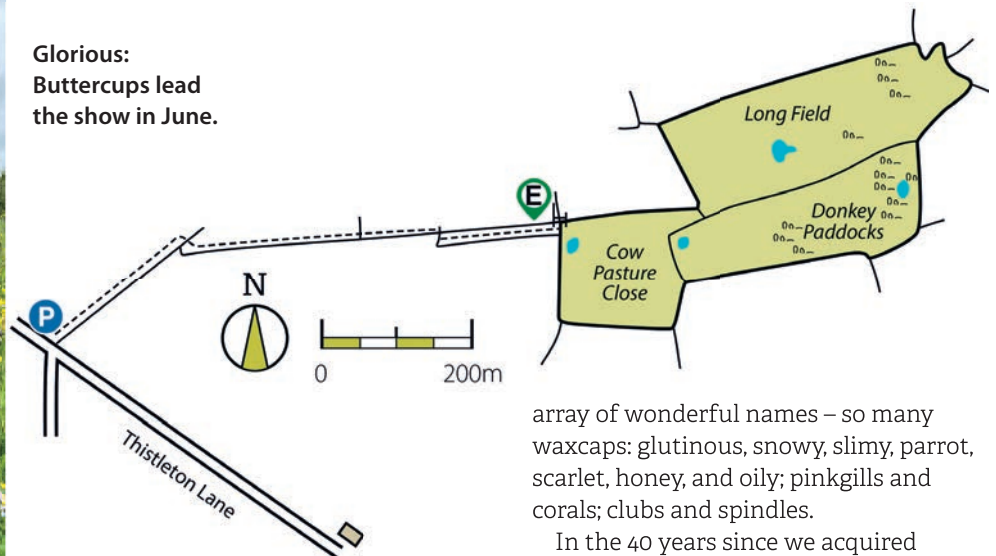


Adder's-tongue fern

BRUCE SHORTLAND



Glorious:
Buttercups lead
the show in June.



of fern found in grasslands between May and August. It is impossible to mistake adder's-tongue for another flower, with its distinctive shiny oval upright frond bearing a single, tall, central spike.

The rest of the wildflower list to be found at Merry's Meadows in summer reads like a Who's Who of superstar English meadow species. You can tick off pignut, meadow and bulbous buttercup, yellow-rattle, cuckooflower, bugle, water avens, tormentil, bird's-foot-trefoil, lady's bedstraw, great burnet, meadow vetchling, betony, saw-wort, dropwort, betony, ox-eye daisy, pepper saxifrage, quaking grass, common knapweed, goat's beard, fairy flax, and milkwort.

And with all those wildflowers to choose from, you can expect a diverse range of insect life. Depending on the month, butterflies and day-flying moths recorded on the wing here might include painted lady, brimstone, common blue, meadow brown, small copper, comma, small skipper and small heath, black chimney sweeper, and six-spot burnet.

The ponds and hedgerows of the meadow have much to offer too. Full of berry bushes such as bramble and hawthorn, the hedges attract overwintering birds such as fieldfare and redwing.

Visit in spring to tune into the constant song from a plethora of birdlife: chiffchaff, willow warbler, whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, yellowhammer, skylark, dunnoek, song thrush, blackbird, and reed bunting. Add to your list buzzards, kestrels, red kites and curlews heard and seen above you as

you pass between the fields, and the site begins to feel more of an oasis for wildlife than an isolated island among the arable fields.

Although most of Merry's is neutral grassland, if you wander to the bottom (eastern) end of Donkey Paddocks, you'll find a compartment of more acidic grassland. Hosting another diverse range of wildflower species, it's an interesting place to explore and feels like another treat revealed by the meadows at the end of your walk.

Speaking of unexpected treats, a visit in here in the autumn, after the mowing and grazing has taken place, may seem an unlikely time to enjoy yet more of Merry's treasures, but this grassland has a final flourish before the year is over: fungi. For the fungi lover, a visit in October or November is a must. Last November, 15 species of grassland fungi were found here. Under grey skies and squally showers nestles a rainbow of stunning colours with an accompanying



array of wonderful names – so many waxcaps: glutinous, snowy, slimy, parrot, scarlet, honey, and oily; pinkgills and corals; clubs and spindles.

In the 40 years since we acquired Merry's Meadows, it has retained its timeless character. Our primary aim over the past four decades has been to maintain and enhance this delicate grassland habitat and its wildlife, so everyone can enjoy an idyllic slice of stunning English meadow. Come along to sit peacefully and enjoy the

colours, sounds and scents of wild flowers and the hum of insect life. Even better, bring a hand lens and guidebook to hone your identification skills – be it botany, entomology or fungi. Merry's Meadow will teach, inspire and delight you, whatever the season.

FACTFILE

The reserve is a mile north of Greatham. Park in the closed-off entrance to Great Lane then follow the track opposite for about 400m to the entrance of the reserve, which is accessed via a stile. Dogs on a lead are permitted, but you may be asked to avoid certain areas of the reserve during bird nesting season or when livestock are present.

Nearest postcode: LE15 7RJ

Map ref: SK 928 155

what3words: protected.kept.stage

Parking: Park near the T-junction directly opposite Great Lane, along part of the Viking Way (what3words: snore. handyman.trousers).

Size: 13ha

For further information, please see our Nature Reserve Guide or visit lrwt.org.uk/nature-reserves



FERGUS GILL/2020VISION



In sickness and in health

Nature could save the NHS £millions

Dom Higgins, head of health and education at The Wildlife Trusts, explores the sickness of nature disconnect, how the NHS bears the brunt and how The Wildlife Trusts can help with preventable illnesses.



Over 20 million people in the UK have a muscular-skeletal condition such as arthritis or back pain, while more than 5 million have diabetes. In May 2023 the number of people waiting for an operation was at a record high of 7.3 million – and some are predicting a rise towards 10 million, with one in five people on a hospital waiting list. Long-term sickness is resulting in 2.8 million people of working age being economically inactive. How will the NHS survive?

John from Sheffield had a quadruple heart bypass. He said *"I was in a bad way and would have spiralled into being a recluse. I hate to think really. I had PTSD and sleepless nights."* Liz has early stage dementia and couldn't go anywhere by herself. Just two examples of the longer term recovery from illness and plethora of mental health issues effecting our population today.

But there's a quiet revolution going on in the world of health and social care, which involves taking part in activities from gardening and woodwork, to wildlife conservation and walks in the park. That's because many illnesses and ailments are preventable. For example, physical inactivity can cause heart and breathing conditions, while social isolation and loneliness often lead to depression.

A recent highlight in my career was the opportunity to present the findings of The Wildlife Trusts' report *A Natural Health Service* at The Lancet UK Public Health Science Conference. *The Lancet* is a prestigious international medical journal that advances medical science and practice worldwide. The Lancet Conference highlights public health research from the UK and Ireland. I presented evidence showing that 'green prescribing' programmes, where GPs and healthcare professionals prescribe time in nature

as treatment and therapy, could have significant benefits. If rolled out to 1.2 million people, these programmes could save the NHS £100 million annually. The public health professionals' view was that these cost savings were underestimated.

The Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust's *Wild at Heart* programme reduced costs for the NHS associated with the mental health conditions of their 82 participants over a year by £38,646. The project has literally been a lifeline for John and Liz, connecting them both to the simple pleasures of nature. Now they have a reason to go out and look forward to walks in the local park, learning about birds and photography.

Over 8,000 people took part in seven Wildlife Trusts' social prescribing pilots over two years. The pilots were spread across the country with Gwent Wildlife Trust to The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside leading them; and 57% of participants coming from the most economically under-served places and 21% from ethnic minority communities. There were big reductions in anxiety and depression, and big increases in happiness and life satisfaction, alongside an increase in feeling that 'life is worthwhile.'

Nature prescribing needs to become part of a wider Natural Health Service, one that works hand in hand with the National Health Service.

This is how the NHS will survive.

Dom Higgins is head of health and education at The Wildlife Trusts where he leads their policy and campaigning work in these areas. He is passionate about creating a stronger and more resilient healthcare system that keeps natural connections at its heart.





6 places to see **butterflies**




The first sight of a bright lime yellow brimstone butterfly is a signal that spring is on its way. The comma, peacock, red admiral, small tortoiseshell and clouded yellow all make their fragile first appearance as winter slips away.

Then each fluttering butterfly will emerge to feed on its favourite wildflowers, while skylarks and pipits fly overhead. The next arrivals are the speckled wood and grizzled skipper, followed by the holly blue, orange tip, painted lady and green-veined white. By April on fine sunny days The Wildlife Trusts' nature reserves are coming to life with the beauty of butterflies on the wing. By May a kaleidoscope of butterflies are in flight.

With so many beautiful butterflies and pink, purple and yellow wildflowers on show, prepare to be blown away this spring. Here are six of our best nature reserves for spotting butterflies.

Why not take part in Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count and help assess the health of our environment simply by counting butterflies?

 Find out more at: **bigbutterflycount.**
butterfly-conservation.org

See the spectacle for yourself

1 Maze Park Nature Reserve, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

Maze Park is a green oasis right in the centre of Teesside. There is an abundance of herb species, such as yellow-wort and bird's-foot trefoil that attract more than 12 species of butterfly, including the scarce grayling and dingy skipper.

Where: Thornaby, TS17 6QA

2 Hoe Grange Quarry, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

The flower-rich short limestone grassland and woodland is a haven for butterflies, with 24 different species recorded. These include comma, peacock, red admiral, small tortoiseshell, speckled wood, orange tip, painted lady, large white and small heath among others.

Where: Brassington, DE4 4HX

3 Llanymynech Rocks Nature Reserve, Montgomeryshire & Shropshire Wildlife Trusts

This former limestone quarry is a butterfly hotspot. Its once industrial landscape becomes a riot of wildflowers from spring. Keep your eyes peeled for the dingy and grizzled skippers from April and dark green and silver-washed fritillaries by June.

Where: Llanymynech, SY22 6HD

4 Ketton Quarry, LRWT

The mosaic of grassland, scrub and young woodland makes this a superb site for both butterflies and many rare moths. Look for them in the meadows and glades. Some 27 butterfly species have been recorded here, with dingy skipper, grizzled skipper and marbled white especial stars. Ketton Quarry is also home to glow worms!

Where: Ketton, PE9 3SZ

5 Pamber Forest and Upper Inhams Copse Nature Reserve, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Renowned for its ancient woodland, diverse flora and abundant wildlife, a variety of butterfly species and dragonflies thrive in the reserve's rich habitats. Spot purple emperor, white admiral, speckled wood and brimstone butterfly.

Where: Tadley, RG26 3EQ

6 Queendown Warren, Kent Wildlife Trust

Nestled on the outskirts of the Medway towns, this hidden gem provides the perfect habitat for orchids, Kentish milkwort and the adonis blue butterfly, which was reintroduced to the site by Kent Wildlife Trust in 2002. They can often be seen at the site tumbling in the sky with the chalk hill and common blue butterflies.

Where: Sittingbourne, ME9 7XH

Did you spot any butterflies?

We'd love to know how your search went. Please share your best photos with us!



@wildlifetrusts



@thewildlifetrusts



MY **WILD** LIFE: Dave Needham, Stamford

“I’m helping nature recover, and it’s a personal recovery for me too”

Discover how a conversation at a Townswomen’s Guild meeting in the mid-1970s led to more than 50 years of volunteering with Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, as Dave Needham tells Wendy Tobitt.

What are your earliest wildlife memories?

Our family home backed onto the Stamford School field, and we played there all the time. I was about five years old running around, climbing trees, having fun outdoors. All children had so much freedom then.

My first bird book was *The Observer’s Book of British Birds*. I liked birds because they were easy to see.

Who influenced your interest in wildlife?

We didn’t have television until I was 10 years old, but I remember being fascinated by David Attenborough’s Zoo Quest programmes and entertained by Johnny Morris’ Animal Magic.



NICK UPTON

Red-tailed mason bee entering her snail shell nest.



ROSSAN KELLY

How did birdwatching lead you to LRWT?

My wife Carol was talking with friends in Stamford Townswomen’s Guild whose husbands also liked birdwatching, when one of them suggested I went to a Leicestershire and Rutland Natural History Society meeting. This was in 1975 before Rutland Water had been filled. The Society was doing a survey of the wildlife, especially birds, before and during construction. They wanted to know more about the nature that would be affected by creating this huge reservoir.

That’s when I met Tim Appleton. He had just started working for the Wildlife Trust and was showing us around the reserve talking about birdwatching here.

Someone told him I was a carpenter and joiner, and he asked me if I could build a bird hide. I’d not done that before, but I went on to build 15 or 16 bird hides and helped to fit out the Birdwatching Centre. Some people might remember the circular counter – that was my idea.

How were you involved in the Bird Fair?

We started with the Wildfowl Bonanzas of 1987 and ’88. Then the first Bird Fair was held in 1989. I helped with fitting out the marquees and made thousands of nestbox kits that people could take home. Then I helped on the ‘money team’ because fundraising for international organisations helping to protect birds was one of the reasons for the Bird Fair.

Did you know it all began when Martin Davies, from the RSPB international development team and Tim Appleton had a meeting in The Finch's Arms on the Hambleton Peninsula on Rutland Water? I like the idea of it all starting in The Finch's Arms.

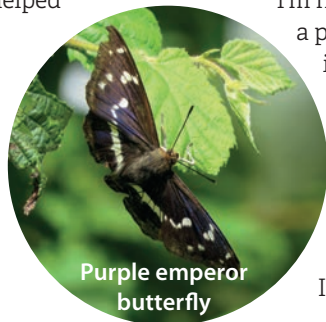
The Bird Fair was so popular. Perhaps too many people came because we now know the soil became compacted and damaged. The aim was to encourage more people to get interested in birdwatching, and it's certainly done that. There are now as many, if not more, women in birdwatching than men.

Did you continue birdwatching?

For 30 years I was a Wetland Bird Survey (WEBS) counter in the winter months. I must have been silly to volunteer to walk the Whitwell to Burley Fishponds route on the northern edge of Rutland Water, into the prevailing wind, rain, snow, whatever the weather!

My wife Carol and I got involved with the Osprey Project too. I'd helped Tim by building holding cages for birds that he brought into Rutland Water. Later Carol and I would use handheld radio trackers to monitor the birds in the evenings. Carol volunteered in the Birdwatching Centre too.

"I've seen black hairstreaks and purple emperors."



Purple emperor butterfly

Where is your favourite place?

It has to be Ketton Quarry, just three miles from where I live. Just being there makes me very happy. The variety of

Above: Celebrating 50 years of volunteering with the Trust last autumn. Right: Dave (second from left) at the opening of Rutland Water's Swan Hide, which he helped build.

50 years is an impressively long time to have been volunteering with the Trust! Very hearty congratulations! What are you most proud of doing during this time?

It's what I'm doing now, out with the work parties on the 14 eastern nature reserves three days a week, working with Sarah and Juliet. I'm more interested in butterflies now and walk transects at Ketton Quarry to count them.

I'm helping nature recover, and it's a personal recovery for me too – it has been three years since Carol died. I'd seen the work parties at Ketton Quarry and went along to join them. I've got arthritis in my knees but there's plenty of physical work that I can do.



Nature's guardians

Join our team! Learn more about volunteering opportunities at lrwt.org.uk/volunteer

habitats is superb and it's the best area in our two counties for butterflies (see page 25). I walk four transects every month between April and September to count the butterflies. A few years ago, I saw 30 species of butterflies and usually see 27 or 29 species. I've seen black hairstreaks and purple emperors.

One of my favourite invertebrates is *Osmia bicolor*, the red-tailed mason bee, which is found in Ketton Quarry. It was called the 'witch bee' on the BBC's Wild Isles because it seems to be riding a broomstick as it carries grass to the nest it makes in a snail shell.

The beech wood at Ketton is the only place to see yellow bird's-nest in Leicestershire and Rutland.

What are you looking forward to this season?

Going out on the work parties, helping nature recover and meeting people. I thoroughly enjoy doing it. The butterfly transects start in April and watching butterflies at Ketton Quarry makes me happy.

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



Dave and Carol were heavily involved with the Trust's Osprey Project.

Pyramidal orchid
Anacamptis pyramidalis



Early purple orchid
Orchis mascula



THE SECRET LIVES OF

Orchids

A walk through nature's
hidden treasures

Lady's slipper orchid
Cypripedium calceolus



© NIAL BENNIE/2020VISION

© WILL ATKINS



Mark Dinning

is head of conservation with Durham Wildlife Trust. Working in nature conservation for over 20 years, Mark is passionate about plants and securing a future thriving with nature.

When I started my career in conservation, the 'Vacancy – warden required to guard rare orchid' advertisement grabbed my attention. Yes, the job was to guard the only known population of the UK's rarest orchids in Yorkshire: the lady's slipper orchid. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is now raising money to grow it and secure its survival.

Years later I found myself researching the lady's slipper orchid at Durham Wildlife Trust, when I stumbled across an article describing this orchid in the Trust's Hawthorn Dene nature reserve. With sadness I read that in 1926 the last of this stunning plant had been picked and given as a gift to a woman by her admirer. UK law now protects wild plants from being picked in this way, but this story is a stark reminder of the fragility of our natural heritage.

Orchids are one of the most diverse groups of plants on the planet. Over 1,000 genera. More than 25,000 species. They are the largest and most highly evolved family of flowering plants.

There are around 57 native orchid species found in Britain (the number varying depending on your source). The number of species is fairly consistent depending on where you live in the country.



Frog orchid
Dactylorhiza viridis

© KIERON HUSTON

Hampshire has 30 plus species, Kent and Sussex about 27-28 species each, the same number as the whole of Scotland! Wales has 32. My native Durham and Northumberland have 27 species. Some are common and others really quite rare.

My children say, 'You're not allowed favourites!' This rule applies to orchids and orchid sites as much as anything else in my life. I can't place one above another - all are special. Allowances are made, with an annual pilgrimage to 'check in on old friends'. Of orchids, some are work friends and we check how they are doing. A reward for past hard endeavours. Like the early purple orchids that greeted me on a walk through an ancient semi-natural woodland on the Durham coast. In past years, Wildlife Trust volunteers removed non-native trees to allow light to reach the woodland floor to restore the ancient woodland native plant community. Imagine my pleasure on a hot May day as the cool, shaded woodland trail led me to the exact spot. A small flush of early purple orchids bathed in sunlight, accompanied by a chorus of bird song and the trickle of the nearby stream.

This walk, I and many Wildlife Trust supporters and colleagues enjoy through spring and summer. Ten orchid species to spot, if you get your timing right.



Southern marsh orchid
Dactylorhiza praetermissa

© VAUGHN MATTHEWS



Bee orchid
Ophrys apifera

The county flower of the Isle of Wight, the pyramidal orchid prefers soils rich in calcium. Like those of the island, the majority of UK orchids prefer calcium-rich soils.

Orchids can produce thousands of very tiny seeds, the greater butterfly orchid producing up to 25,000 seeds per capsule. The fact this sheer number of ultra light seed can be carried by the wind, ensures orchids are able to spread their progeny far and wide. Their success is determined by the environmental conditions they find. If we are to truly restore nature, orchids have many lessons they can teach us. Protecting 30 per cent of land for nature – a commitment made by our government – will mean, in time, some orchid species will find new areas suitable for their growth.

Watching nature reclaim its place in the landscape will be a privilege I thought we may not get to see. But there are examples where people have been doing just that for a number of years.

The dark-red helleborine orchid has been monitored for over 30 years at Bishop Middleham Quarry in County Durham. 2024 was a record year with 3,380 flowering spikes. Surveying at Bishop Middleham is a pleasant late summer evening event with longstanding friends and new enthusiasts.

Spare a thought for the orchid surveyors of The

Frog orchid (their flowers look like frogs, their hind legs jiggling a dance!) rounds off the walk.

Every year the same fear fills my head, 'Where have they all gone?', then sense prevails and I remember I just need to look a little harder. Down on my hands and knees, I focus on a spot and like a magic-eye picture the hidden forest of frog orchids is revealed.

The Plant Atlas 2020 described this species as potentially the UK's fastest declining orchid, the decline linked to agricultural improvement, undergrazing and more recently drought.

Climate and weather are important. For the pyramidal orchid, the plant's basal leaves appear in late autumn and die down the following summer. This growth strategy can leave this orchid vulnerable to climatic differences, with hard cold winters leading to frost damage that jeopardises a plant's success in the coming spring.

Greater butterfly orchid
Platanthera chlorantha



Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire. This intrepid group spend three days counting three orchid species: the man (the flower, a human body with an oddly oversized cycle helmet), musk (not smelling of musk, nationally scarce, declined by 70 per cent), and frog orchid... in late winter!

People travel far and wide to see orchids. So it's nice to finish on a story about orchids that travelled to see people. Recently Essex Wildlife Trust got the opportunity to show off some of their orchids to the King and Queen at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. 'Orchids in the Wild – The Beauty of Nature' showcased the county's native orchids and the Trust's important conservation work. The orchids making the journey were common spotted, green-winged, pyramidal and man orchids. I wish I could have seen the effect the VIP's (very important plants) had on the Royal visitors!

Orchids highlight just what is at risk if we don't address the causes of the nature emergency. Orchids have declined like other plants and species. Restoring habitats that support orchids will have benefits for a vast array of other species. Of my

much-loved orchid walk the woodland holds three orchid species but is home to hundreds of other plants and animals, not to mention fungi and microorganisms. In the meadow, six orchids make their home amongst herbs and grasses, 44 different species in a metre square.

If you were to do just one thing this spring and summer, make your own orchid story.

If you were to do another, ensure the places we should find these special plants are restored and conserved. The more orchids the merrier.

To find an orchid haven near you and see these masters of mimicry for yourself, visit

wildlifetrusts.org/where_to_see_orchids



© PAUL LANE

Common spotted orchid
Dactylorhiza fuchsii



Fly orchid
Ophrys insectifera



© THOMAS MARENT, NATUREPL.COM

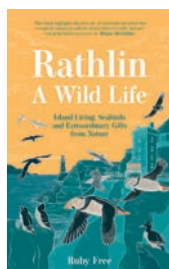
Natural History Book Group

Nothing beats a good read. The Trust's **Wildlife Book Group** offers a hand-picked selection of some of the very best in nature writing and meets monthly, says member **Alison Skinner**.

The Wildlife Book Group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.30am. From March to December the group gathers at the Lyndon Visitor Centre, then in January and February at the Volunteer Training Centre or via Zoom, depending on the weather. The group currently has eight members and would very much welcome new members.

In October members contribute to a list of possible books for the following year and vote to decide which 24 titles are most popular. Two books are then offered each month with titles covering mammals, birds, other wildlife, botany, personal nature writing, rewilding and climate change. Below is a selection of some recent books enjoyed by the group.

All meetings are free of charge and open to anyone, so please get in touch if you are interested in joining. For more details and to download this year's book list visit: lrwt.org.uk/book-club



Rathlin, A Wild Life
by Ruby Free
Published by Blackstaff Press Ltd, 2024

This is an account of a ranger's life for a season on the wildlife-rich Rathlin Island off the coast of Northern Ireland. We

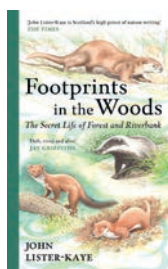
enjoyed learning about the work needed to support a reserve like this in an unfamiliar place. The author is very enthusiastic, learning on the job in her first wildlife post. She revealed some personal vulnerabilities and some of her actions and judgements seemed a little naïve to some, but it was easy to read and in the light of recent floods the sunshine and optimism in the book proved welcome.



The Insect Crisis
by Oliver Milman
Published by Atlantic Books, 2023

We read *Silent Earth* by Dave Goulson in 2022, which exposed the crisis in insect numbers affecting

the worldwide food chain. This book provides more background on the research in different countries documenting insect declines and its consequences. The role of bees in pollinating crops in America and how this process can be safeguarded is well described, while the fate of Monarch butterflies whose breeding pattern has been disrupted by climate change was highlighted. This is a demanding but important work building on Goulson's original alarm bell, but which spends more time documenting the problem than suggesting solutions.



Footprints in the Woods
by John Lister Kaye
Published by Canongate Books, 2023

John Lister Kaye is Director of the Aigas Centre in Perthshire and one of

three contemporary nature writers in Scotland we regularly read. This was his lockdown book and it describes his encounters with the Mustelidae family of mammals – otters, badgers, weasels and pine martens – over the course of a year around his home. A delightful but unsentimental book which includes his memories of raising a baby weasel at his boarding school and then returning it to the wild. This is balanced by his fieldcraft in finding the breeding site of a female weasel and family near his home. Pine martens are regularly seen



at Aigas and shown to guests. Earlier books by him are well recommended.



The Last Sunset in the West
by Natalie Sanders
Published by Sandstone Press Ltd, 2023

Anyone who has been transfixed by the footage of orcas in David

Attenborough's nature programmes will learn a lot from Natalie Sanders' survey of the different pods of these marine mammals. While learning the basic biology of orcas we also learn how their behaviour and prey differ according to their varying habitats and the intelligence they display in adapting to change.

In the second part of the book Saunders joins a study tour on a vessel researching the orca pod in the Hebrides, where named individuals were searched for and their previous sightings recorded. Sadly, while the Shetland orcas seem to be in good health with new calves spotted, the Hebridean orcas seem to be in decline from possible pollution in their food sources and inbreeding. A very accessible book to improve knowledge of these charismatic mammals.

Beguiled by badgers

These fascinating animals face many threats. David Duckett of the Leicestershire and Rutland Badger Group calls for your help.

Few people see live badgers as they are both nocturnal and spend most of their time underground. Nevertheless, the badger is an iconic British mammal. In 2017 the badger population was estimated at 485,000 across England and Wales, but numbers have greatly declined since then. While badgers and their setts may be protected by law, they continue to face many threats and need our support.

The threats to badgers

Planning applications should include appropriate protection or mitigation for badgers, yet processes aren't always followed, which can harm them. Then there is their active persecution, including baiting (where badgers are dug out then set upon by dogs) and sett blocking, which happens for a variety of nefarious reasons, such as preventing illegally hunted foxes going to ground. Many badgers get killed on our roads, as often seen locally, with an estimated 50,000 badgers dying this way every year.

Finally, there is legal badger culling, ongoing in England since 2013. Appallingly, 230,125 badgers have been killed as of 2023, with more than 1,500 of these killed in Leicestershire. This decimation is based on the Government's belief that badgers are a major cause of bovine TB in cattle. Yet following significant research, most mainstream badger scientists consistently refute this view, identifying the contribution by badgers as small at most.

Local Badger Groups

The Badger Trust is the voice for badgers in England and Wales. It works to promote the welfare, conservation and protection of badgers, their setts and habitats. It has an affiliated network of more than 50 local badger groups, run by volunteers to deliver services to help badgers on the ground.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Badger Group (LRBG) is one of these local groups. While we are also affiliated to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, we have our own membership, with a current annual subscription of £10.

Our group formed in 1984, and we aim to meet the aspirations of the Badger Trust. This includes rescuing injured badgers, recording and monitoring badger setts, advising on badger-related issues (working with other agencies as required), campaigning for badgers, and organising guided walks and talks. We are focussed on protecting badgers across our two counties, providing education and advice about these amazing animals and encouraging people to care for and live alongside them.

Seeking support

LRBG is at a stage where we wish to strengthen the group, which is why we are inviting you, the many members of LRWT, to consider becoming a member of the group or the committee. For our committee, we are especially keen to hear from those who can offer the following

skills: developing/managing our website, general IT skills, basic financial skills, organising and promoting talks and other events, and collecting and managing data (such as our badger sett records).

We would also be delighted to receive interest from future members to deal with various badger-related issues. These include attending injured or trapped badgers, responding to public enquiries about badger 'problems', recording badger setts and presenting talks on badgers. Full training would be given.

Can you help?

If you would like to be involved with the Leicestershire and Rutland Badger Group, please get in touch!



Find out more: badgergroup.org.uk or facebook.com/leicsrutlandbadgers

General enquiries: Contact David Duckett, LRBG Chair on 0116 2597231 or david.p.duckett@btinternet.com

Membership: Email Sue Allison at sueallison230@gmail.com or phone Peter Mynott on 0116 2715006.



Events & Activities

May – August 2025

Join an event and feed your wild side

Our full events programme can be found online. Check there for further details, including how to book, prices, times, and venue. Anyone booked on an event or volunteering activity will be notified of any changes. New events are constantly being added, so please check regularly for the latest updates: lrwt.org.uk/events

MAY

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Guided Walk with Jeff
Fri 2 May, 9.30am – 12.30pm
Your guide, Jeff Davies, has a wealth of knowledge which will make your morning's walk both enjoyable and informative. £10pp (£5 for annual permit holders).

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Dawn Chorus Day
Sun 4 May, 5-8am
Rise at the crack of dawn on International Dawn Chorus Day for a walk around Rutland Water to enjoy the incredible dawn chorus. Includes tea/coffee and pastries. £20pp.

Cossington Meadows

Dawn Chorus Walk
Tues 6 May, 5-8am
Join Andy Neilson on a dawn chorus walk around the majestic meadows. £14pp.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Drystone Walling
Sat 10 and Sun 11 May, 9.30am – 4pm
Get to grips with the skills necessary to make your own drystone wall. £99pp.



Loughborough Naturalists' Club

Exhibition and Peter Gamble Memorial Lecture
Sat 10 May, 6pm
Doors open at 6pm for the club's 65th Anniversary Exhibition Evening, followed by a lecture by Tim Sexton at 7.30pm. Meet at the King George V Meeting Room behind Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall, LE12 8RZ. £3 members/£3.50 non-members.

Charnwood Local Group

House of Games
Weds 14 May, 7.30pm
An evening of quizzing with a difference, taking inspiration from some of TV's popular quizzing shows.

Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group

Bat Walk
Thurs 15 May, 8.45pm
Search for bats on this walk around Charnwood Water, off Tuckers Road, Loughborough. Park on the road and meet in the car park.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Guided Walk with Jeff
Fri 16 May, 9.30am – 12.30pm
See 2nd May for details.

Merry's Meadow

Green-Winged Orchids
Fri 16 May, 1-3pm
Join Reserves Officer Sarah Bedford on this walk to learn about green-winged orchids and other spring wild flowers.

Loughborough Big Meadow

Botany Walk
Weds 21 May, 10am – 12.30pm
Discover a range of wild flowers, including meadow saxifrage and narrow-leaved water-dropwort.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walk
Fri 23 May, 9.30am – 12.30pm
Take a three-hour guided walk led by Terry Mitcham, bird recorder of the Rutland Natural History Society and a very experienced birdwatcher.

Cossington Meadows

Birdsong Walk
Mon 26 May, 8.30-10.30am
Tune in to the sweet springtime melodies of birds on this family-friendly event.

Lucas Marsh

Slugs and Snails
Thurs 29 May, 10am - 12pm
Members event celebrating these often-misunderstood molluscs. Donations welcome.

JUNE

Cossington Meadows

Barn Owl Walk
Weds 4 June, 8.30-10pm
Wild Walk led by Chris Hill to search for barn owls as they head out to hunt. £15pp.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Guided Walk with Jeff
Fri 6 June, 9.30am – 12.30pm
See 2nd May for details.

Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group

Dusk survey of soprano pipistrelles
Fri 6 June, 9-10.30pm
Join the annual count with the help of bat detectors at Eggleton Church, LE15 8AD.

Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group

Dusk survey of soprano pipistrelles
Mon 9 June, 9-10.30pm
The annual bat count continues at Braunston-in-Rutland Church, LE15 8QS.

Ulverscroft

Orchid Walk
Tues 10 June, 10am – 12.30pm
Admire the orchids of Herbert's Meadow, including fragrant, bee and heath-spotted orchids. £12.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Guided Walk with Jeff
Fri 13 June, 9.30am – 12.30pm
See 2nd May for details.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Volunteer Training Centre

Drystone Walling
Sat 14 and Sun 15 June, 9.30am – 4pm
See 10th May for details.

North West Local Group

Glow Worm Hunt
Fri 13 June, 9.30-10.45pm
An illuminating evening! Meet at Albert Village Lake Car Park on Occupation Road (what3words: good.local.gain). Contact Phil Richardson on 07974 725628. Bring a torch.

Cribb's Meadow

Butterflies and Wildflowers
Weds 18 June, 11am – 1pm
Discovery walk around the delicate Cribb's Meadow. Take time to linger and identify the myriad of wildflowers and butterflies. £12.

Ketton Quarry

Butterflies in the Quarry
Fri 20 June, 1-3pm
Join Reserves Officer Sarah Bedford on this butterfly bonanza. This old quarry, now limestone grassland, is the perfect place to find them. £12.

Rutland Water Nature Reserve: Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre

Terry's Friday Birdwatching Walk
Fri 27 June, 9.30am – 12.30pm
See 23rd May for details.

Melton Mowbray Local Group

Holwell Reserves Open Day
Sun 29 June, 10am – 4pm
Learn more about the reserve with guided walks, refreshments and children's activities. A fantastic family day out.



Osprey Cruises on Rutland Water

Dates: May 24, 28 & 31; June 4, 7, 11, 18 & 26; July 2, 5, 16, 23 & 30; Aug 2, 6, 9 & 13

Join us for our guided boat trips to see the ospreys at Rutland Water. Members of the Osprey Project team will be there to guide you throughout the trip, sharing details about the ospreys and the project. With luck, you will enjoy views of the birds diving for fish, making it a trip to remember.

The 90-minute evening cruises leave from Whitwell Harbour on the north shore of Rutland Water (LE15 8BL) at 6pm. Adults £28, Under 16s £18.

**The Palace Ibstock**

Sat 9 and Sun 10 Aug,
10am – 4pm

Ibstock Summer Safari

Join a family-friendly safari into the wilds of Ibstock, spotting wildlife art and learning about endangered animals.

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

Fri 15 Aug, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

See 2nd May for details.

**Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group**

Fri 15 Aug, 8.30pm

Moirs Furnace Bat Walk

Walk along the canal and through the furnace plantation as we look for bats.

**Holwell Reserves**

Thurs 21 Aug, 11am – 3pm

Wondrous Wildlife Trail

Follow the trail through the reserve to learn about wildlife. Test your knowledge back at base!

**Cossington Meadows**

Fri 29 Aug, 10am – 12pm

Bird Survey Walk

Join Andrew Neilsen on this walk around Cossington Meadows as he discusses the results of his monthly bird surveys. £10.

**Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group**

Sat 30 Aug, 7.45pm

Watermead Park Bat Walk

Explore the bats of Watermead Country Park as the setting sun stirs them into life. Park on Whiles Lane.

SEPTEMBER**Charnwood Local Group**

Weds 10 Sept, 7.30pm

The Making of Springwatch

Jack Baddams, Springwatch cameraman and naturalist, tells us about his role on one of the UK's most beloved nature programmes.

Check
online
for the full and
latest programme
of events

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

Fri 4 July, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

See 2nd May for details.

**Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group**

Fri 4 July, 9-10.30pm

Bats and Glow Worms

Look for pipistrelle and Daubenton's bats over the river and, if we're lucky, Noctule bats. Then after dark, search for glow worms in the old quarry grassland at Ketton Quarry. Meet at Ketton Church.

**Rutland Local Group**

Sun 6 July, 2-4.30pm

Bloody Oaks Quarry

Stroll around this gem of a reserve to explore the calcareous limestone flora and associated butterflies. Free and no need to book.

**Cloud Wood**

Mon 7 July, 10am – 12.30pm

Purple Emperor Walk

Meet at Top Brand layby. A chance to look for magnificently iridescent purple emperor butterflies. £12.

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

Fri 18 July, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

See 2nd May for details.

**Charnwood Local Group**

Event to run in July – time and date TBC

Queen's Park Bioblitz

Join this survey of Loughborough's Queen's Park, in association with Loughborough Naturalists' Club and idverde.

**Cossington Meadows**

Weds 30 July, 2-4pm

Birds and Mini Beasts

Go on the hunt for mini beasts and birds on this family members walk.

**The Green Place, Sileby**

Weds 30 July, 7-11pm

Creatures of the Night

Fundraising evening in partnership with the Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group. Film night, moth trapping and bat ID. Refreshments available. £17.50pp (adults only).

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

Fri 1 Aug, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Guided Walk with Jeff

See 2nd May for details.

**Cossington Meadows**

Weds 6 Aug, 7.45-9.15pm

Barn Owl Walk

Head out at dusk to search for these majestic birds. £15.

**Charnwood Lodge**

Fri 8 Aug, 10am – 12.30pm

Heathland Wildlife Walk

Look for wall brown butterflies and lizards around Bomb Rocks. Members only event.

**Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group**

Fri 8 Aug, 8.45pm

Thornton Reservoir Bat Walk

Join this evening walk for a chance to hear and see bats.

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

Sat 9 – Sun 10 August, 9.30am – 4pm

Drystone Walling

See 10th May for details.

Local groups**Charnwood Local Group**

Indoor meetings: Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall, 50 Main St, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough, LE12 8RZ.

Admission £3 members, £3.50 non-members, children free.

Check website for walk events.

Contact Kate Moore on

01509 891005,

katemore123@yahoo.co.uk

Great Bowden Local Group

Indoor meetings: The Village Hall, The Green, Great Bowden, LE16 7EU. Admission £4.

Contact Bruce White on

07919 935496.

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 Church, 5 Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, LE65 2LF. Admission £3. Contact

David Maltby on

01530 222934 or Margaret

Mabey on **01530 412410.**

Rutland Local Group

Indoor meetings: Volunteer

Training Centre, off Oakham

Road, Hambleton, LE15 8BP.

Admission £2. Contact Becky

Howard on **07908 252271.**

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Meetings held online via Teams.

Contact Dr David Duckett on

0116 259 7231,

info@badgergroup.org.uk

Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group

Wear warm clothes and

appropriate footwear 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 others. Booking essential

by emailing **batevents@**

outlook.com



**Leicestershire
& Rutland**
Wildlife Trust

Share our vision of a wilder future?

We believe Leicestershire and Rutland should be rich in wildlife, with more wild places and more opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Help us shape a legacy that will continue long after you are gone. With your support we can continue to help nature recover and ensure future generations can enjoy wild places – just as you do today.

Leaving a gift to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust in your Will, no matter how big or small, will have a lasting impact on our work.

Write your will for free!

We have partnered with Octopus Legacy so you can write or update your Will for free. What will you leave behind?

For more information or to begin creating your Will for free, please visit lrwt.org.uk/legacy



*Write your
Will for free*

