

Kingfisher



Sheffield &
Rotherham



In this edition...

Otters on the Don
New species
on our reserves
Volunteering
with us

How you
can help...

Please complete
our survey.

Tell us how you
value nature.

See cover letter for more.

For other ways you can support us, visit
wildsheffield.com/how-you-can-help

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust
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✉ mail@wildsheffield.com

Find out more
wildsheffield.com

Volunteers

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If you have any comments or suggestions for future issues, you are welcome to write to the editors at the Trust's postal address, or via email at kingfisher@wildsheffield.com

Cover photo: © Nick Hurst @bearprintsphoto



Thank you to everyone who came to our AGM this year. We had a fantastic speaker in Mike Dilger (of BBC's *The One Show*). The fact that he knew Sheffield from his childhood, really appreciated urban wildlife but also clearly had an amazing knowledge of the natural world was very inspiring.

We had two new Trustees join the Board at the AGM – Dr Alison Holt and Mark Ridler – both bringing valuable skills and experience to the Trust. Christopher Pennell remains as our Chair, supported by David Bird as Vice-Chair and Tom Dodd as Treasurer.

The AGM is always a great opportunity to reflect on the Trust's impact and work as well as catch up with our members. It was great to see so many familiar and new faces in the audience. It is one of a few opportunities I have in the year to meet with members personally. As we are very much a membership organisation, it is great to hear about the issues that are important to you and what you think the Trust is doing well or should be doing better.

And to take this approach further, we are asking our members to take part in a survey, developed in partnership with the University of Sheffield.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey. It will help us to better understand how you value nature and will help us to achieve our vision of a Living Landscape, as well as ensure we continue to meet our members' expectations.

If you do not feel able to complete the survey but would still like to send in a letter, email or any comments then please do contact us direct at mail@wildsheffield.com

I look forward to hearing from you!

Liz Ballard
Chief Executive

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A big thank you to all
our partners and funders:



Sheffield Town Trust



Secrets of the deep

Kingfisher editor Jane Campbell meets the team tracking otters in the heart of Sheffield.



Otter © Nick Hurst @bearprintsphoto

Just underneath the surface of central Sheffield lurks an unknown world – crumbling tunnels, cathedral-like Victorian sewers and a tangle of sleek modern pipes and channels.

It's not the natural habitat of either an ecologist or an iconic mammal, I reflect whilst wading towards an ancient mud-ridden culvert, balsam and brambles tugging at my clothes, but it's been home to the Trust's Nature Counts project for the past eighteen months.

I've come to part of the city's urban drainage system connected to the River Don, in an undisclosed location right in the heart of Sheffield, to meet Sara Blackburn and Paul Richards – the Nature Counts ecologists – and we're about to take to the city's waterways on the trail of Sheffield's otters. There's something incredibly exciting about the idea that one of the country's most sensitive and elusive mammals is making these tunnels its territory.

In fact, the first site where the team have installed a trail camera is alive with nature. It's bursting with bulrushes, water mint and marsh marigold. A moorhen beats a retreat as we approach and a shoal of large fish flick through the sunlit water.

I'm astonished the water is so clear, and say so. Paul agrees. "When you talk to some of our older volunteers, they remember when parts of the Don had an orange-brown crust and a film of petroleum. Fifty years ago it was basically an unfettered drain for local factories. You would walk through



the water praying the rubber in your boots would be tough enough not to dissolve.

"It's still not perfect but the invertebrates are coming back. You now see species as vulnerable to pollution as the banded demoiselle – right in the heart of Sheffield, whereas a decade or so ago you would have had to go to the far side of Doncaster to find them. And with the insects come the fish – and that's what's paving the way for the otters. What we want to know now, is whether the Don's ecosystem is healthy enough to support a sustainable otter population – as an apex predator they are a key indicator of the river's health."



91 square kilometres surveyed

125 signs of otters verified

Otters confirmed present
in **26.7%** of study area

30+ video clips of
otters captured

Otters were pushed to the brink of extinction in the UK in the 1950s through pesticide poisoning, water pollution and persecution. In Sheffield and Rotherham, pollution and toxins, unsympathetic engineering solutions and the dumped waste products of the local steel industry, made the rivers almost completely inhospitable to wildlife.

So what has changed since then? Sara explains.

"For decades countless people – agencies and volunteers – have struggled to make the Don a better place for wildlife, and there were encouraging signs that otters were making a comeback, but we needed to know for sure. Solid data on the Don's otters has been pretty sparse for the last ten years – since the 2007 floods in fact – and we needed to take action."

"The Nature Counts project as a whole has responded to huge gaps in our ecological data not just for otters but for other key

local species too," she explains. "We want people to count nature, and in turn we want to show how nature counts for people – how it has an impact on our daily lives. We'll be doing that in the city's first *State of Nature* report next year."

But it has been a challenge. Paul groans as we approach the second camera – it's been stolen. "You see," he says, "busy urban locations make our task doubly hard." And it's clearly not an easy job – over the course of the day we clamber up and down ladders, heave sandbags and debris on top of cameras, and crawl through a labyrinth of insalubrious nooks and crannies. Sara tells me that she has spent hours disguising cameras as rocks and bins to keep them safe, and that during nocturnal monitoring forays they have had to fend off some of the more interesting human encounters too.

"In Sheffield, if you see someone under a bridge sniffing a stone, they're probably an ecologist carrying out an otter survey," she jokes.

All is far from lost though. At the third and final culvert our hard work is rewarded with a special find – a mink spraint and an otter spraint close together on the same concrete plinth – which triggers an impromptu identification briefing and obligatory sniff-test from Sara. The otter spraint is oaty-sweet and the mink reeks of ammonia – they're impossible to confuse. There are footprints here as well – although otters are five-toed, their prints often only show four.

Buoyed by these finds, we dash back to headquarters and Sara starts the laborious process of sifting through the footage – and there it is! On the very same plinth that we just visited, an otter – strong, lithe and unmistakable, from just a day or two ago. I am spellbound.

"In Sheffield, if you see someone under a bridge sniffing a stone, they're probably an ecologist carrying out an otter survey."

This glimpse is just a fraction of the data collected by the project team and their dedicated volunteers. More than 125 signs of otters including 100 spraints have been collected and verified by the project, over an area stretching from Oughtibridge to beyond Rotherham. The Trust now has confirmed presence of otters in over 25 per cent of the 91 square kilometres surveyed, and much of the evidence is repeated, indicating that otters are not just passing through but are regularly present on the Don across all seasons.

The Trust now plans to monitor artificial holts to confirm whether otters are resident and breeding in the area. And not all of the Don is yet as thriving as the patch we visited. The Nature Counts project has laid the foundations: there is now a pressing need to ensure that the Outdoor City's watery underbelly can provide a safe and enduring home for this most loved of our aquatic mammals.

Nature Counts is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Find out more ...

Go to wildsheffield.com/NatureCounts for footage of otters, more on our Otterly Amazing project, Nature Counts and our upcoming *State of Nature* report.

Working for wildlife on our reserves

Summer may seem a long time ago, but it was an exciting time for local wildlife spotters.

New species found on reserves



Skylark © Stephan Johansson

Summer has been an exciting time on our reserves, with several species being recorded for the first time.

A detailed bird survey on Woodhouse Washlands has revealed around 60 bird species using the site, including less common species such as grasshopper warbler, hobby and little egret. We're particularly pleased to see a good increase in breeding skylark numbers; installation of new fencing compartments last year has allowed us to better manage conservation grazing and reduce disturbance from visitors in core breeding areas. Five breeding territories were recorded on the site this year, and we're hoping to see further increases as this year's juveniles establish more new territories in the future.

Pied flycatchers may also be back from the brink at Wyming Brook in the Rivelin Valley, having experienced a drastic decline in the area since the 1990s. We have been working hard to reverse this worrying trend, and this year, for the first time in many years, we were absolutely delighted to have recorded a nesting pair on the reserve.

In the 1990s around 15 pairs of breeding flycatchers were recorded in the Rivelin Valley – in recent years this has sunk to just two pairs. Our reserves team have been working in the area to help address this mysterious decline by safeguarding the nesting sites of this migrant latecomer until they arrive on our shores in April. Why the number of breeding pairs has sunk so much is unclear – it could be due to factors in their winter home of tropical Africa or to changes in landscape management here in the UK affecting the extent of their breeding habitat.

This coming winter we are carrying out further woodland management work at Wyming Brook to help the pied flycatcher fight back, and we have plans to work with our local partners in the future to do even more.

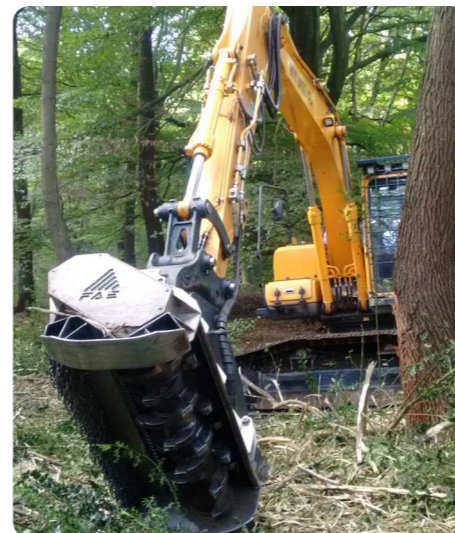
Wildflower power is back!

Wildflower meadows and bluebell colonies are vital species-rich habitats which need lots of care if they're not to be choked by invasive scrub, holly and brambles.

Thanks to funding from Veolia Environmental Trust, we have been able to ramp up our woodland management work in the Moss Valley this year, cutting back invasive holly which is threatening to swamp out the spectacular bluebells which thrive here. This funding has enabled us to use a specialist holly flail, an agile machine which is able to move through the difficult woodland terrain shredding any holly shrubs which it comes across, leaving the woodland floor clear for spring wildflowers and natural tree regeneration.

In autumn and winter we will be carrying on this work, thinning some of the woodland areas to create space for 'future veteran' trees to thrive. If you'd like to help out, why not join in one of the regular volunteer work days on the site? It will make your enjoyment of next spring's bluebells doubly rewarding! See pages 14-15 for more on volunteering with us.

Work has also been continuing at Carr House Meadows to restore the meadow areas: watch out for more on this in next spring's *Kingfisher*.



Holly flail at Moss Valley © Nabil Abbas

Surveying and monitoring wildlife is a vital part of our work, helping us manage our nature reserves in the best way for local wildlife. Only by tracking populations systematically do we know definitively whether the habitat work we carry out every year is making a difference, and safeguarding nature for future generations. This takes time – and we couldn't manage it without the support of our volunteers and members. Thank you to you all for making good news like this possible. Share your sightings with us on Twitter @WildSheffield or email the Trust at kingfisher@wildsheffield.com

Help
out...

on our reserves, see
pages 8-9 or visit
[wildsheffield.com/
whats-on](http://wildsheffield.com/whats-on)



Tackling nuisance off-roading

Green spaces across north Sheffield have been suffering for a number of years from off-roading – where motorised vehicles illegally use footpaths and bridleways for recreational purposes. Smithy Wood and one of our own reserves, Greno Woods, have been particularly affected – and according to South Yorkshire Police the number of reports are on the increase.

It is illegal for motorised vehicles to use private land without the landowner's permission, or to use footpaths and bridleways unless these are also public roads on the site. Illegal motor bikes and quads – and even 4x4 vehicles – cause damage to vegetation, fences, walls and gates as they try to access sites. Not only do they disturb wildlife (especially ground-nesting birds), they pose a danger to other members of the public using the site too.

To help tackle this, our nature reserves team teamed up with South Yorkshire Police's Operation Propel, monitoring and reporting instances of nuisance off-roading. We have also taken action at Greno Woods by making the boundaries of this precious green space more secure and making access points impassable by motorised vehicles. Earlier this year volunteers (pictured) installed a horse hop thanks to funding from the National Lottery's Awards for All programme.

We hope Greno users are noticing the difference! If you have any concerns relating to the use of illegal off-road bikes, or would like to report an incident, please speak to a local police officer or ring South Yorkshire police on 101.

A future landscape for Sheffield's 'Lakeland'

You may have heard that the Trust is leading a five-year, £3 million Heritage Lottery-funded project to enhance a very special area to the west of Sheffield dubbed the city's 'Lakeland' landscape.

The area is defined by its reservoirs, stretching from Langsett Reservoir and the Little Don Valley in the north, to Redmires Reservoir and the Rivelin Valley in the south and from the moorland slopes and watershed in the west to the River Don Valley and urban fringe in the east. Water will be key to the project – providing accessible landscape for the people of Sheffield to enjoy as well as clean drinking water to the city's population – and an exciting opportunity to explore natural flood management techniques too.

Sheffield's Lakeland fringe is both popular and busy, which has put both the land and its wildlife at risk. Goshawk have stopped breeding in the area whilst the white-clawed crayfish is on the brink of extinction. There's also huge potential to boost populations of otter and water vole, and improve woodland habitat for small birds such as spotted and pied flycatcher and the willow tit.

The Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership team are currently working to define the actions that will best support this much-loved landscape, and in spring 2018 will be releasing details of a raft of projects which will be taken forward by the landscape partnership over the next five years, securing the future of the Lakeland landscape for future generations to enjoy.

Find out more about Sheffield's Lakeland at wildsheffield.com/SheffieldLakeland

November

Monday 13th
Centenary Riverside Work Day
Riverside Way, S60 1DS
10am - 3pm

Thursday 16th
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Friday 17th
Woodhouse Washlands Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Sunday 19th
Wyming Brook Volunteer Taster Day 🗡️
Redmires Road car park
10am - 11am

Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Wednesday 22nd
Sunnybank Work Day
Broomhall Place, S10 2DG
10am - 12noon

Thursday 23rd
Badgers: An Evening with South Yorkshire Badger Group 🌸
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Rd, S2 2SF
6.30 for 7pm - 9pm

Friday 24th
Greno Woods Volunteer Taster Day
Woodhead Road car park, S35 8RS
10am - 11am

Greno Woods Work Day
Woodhead Road car park, S35 8RS
10am - 3pm

December

Friday 1st
Wild at Heart Wildlife Gardening
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
10am - 3pm

Saturday 2nd
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Monday 4th
Crabtree Ponds Work Day
Crabtree Close, S5 7BJ
10am - 12.30pm

Tuesday 5th
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Thursday 7th
Moss Valley Woodlands Work Day
Hazlehurst Lane layby, S8 8DZ
10am - 3pm

Monday 11th
Centenary Riverside Work Day
Riverside Way, S60 1DS
10am - 3pm

Wednesday 13th
Sunnybank Work Day
Broomhall Place, S10 2DG
10am - 12noon

Friday 15th
Woodhouse Washlands Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Thursday 21st
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Friday 22nd
Greno Woods Work Day
Woodhead Road car park, S35 8RS
10am - 3pm

January

Thursday 4th
Moss Valley Woodlands Work Day
Hazlehurst Lane layby, S8 8DZ
10am - 3pm

Friday 5th
Wild at Heart Wildlife Gardening
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
10am - 3pm

Saturday 6th
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Monday 8th
Crabtree Ponds Work Day
Crabtree Close, S5 7BJ
10am - 12.30pm

Centenary Riverside Work Day
Riverside Way, S60 1DS
10am - 3pm

Tuesday 9th
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Thursday 18th
Natural Health Evening with Wild at Heart and the University of Sheffield 🌸
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
6.30 for 7pm - 9pm

Thursday 18th
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Friday 19th
Woodhouse Washlands Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Sunday 21st
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Wednesday 24th
Sunnybank Work Day
Broomhall Place, S10 2DG
10am - 12noon

Friday 26th
Greno Woods Work Day
Woodhead Road car park, S35 8RS
10am - 3pm

February

Thursday 1st
Moss Valley Woodlands Work Day
Hazlehurst Lane layby, S8 8DZ
10am - 3pm

Friday 2nd
Wild at Heart Wildlife Gardening
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
10am - 3pm

Saturday 3rd
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Monday 5th
Crabtree Ponds Work Day
Crabtree Close, S5 7BJ
10am - 12.30pm

Tuesday 6th
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Monday 12th
Centenary Riverside Work Day
Riverside Way, S60 1DS
10am - 3pm

Thursday 15th
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Friday 16th
Woodhouse Washlands Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Friday 19th
Wildscapes Winter Tree Identification 🌸
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
9.30am - 4.30pm
How well do you know your bark and buds? Learn how to identify a wide range of native broad-leaved species, as well as some conifers. Classroom session in the morning and a practical session in the afternoon.
Cost: £80 non-members/£75 members

Friday 23rd
Greno Woods Work Day
Woodhead Road car park, S35 8RS
10am - 3pm

Wednesday 28th
Sunnybank Work Day
Broomhall Place, S10 2DG
10am - 12noon

March

Thursday 1st
Moss Valley Woodlands Work Day
Hazlehurst Lane layby, S8 8DZ
10am - 3pm

Friday 2nd
Wild at Heart Wildlife Gardening
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
10am - 3pm

Saturday 3rd
Mammal Identification Workshop 🌸
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
10am - 3pm
Learn how to identify the mammals of South Yorkshire on this all day workshop. Learn to recognise their tracks, signs and the mammals themselves, with local ecologist Debbie Alston.
Cost: £15 non-members/£10 members

Saturday 3rd
Blacka Moor Work Day
Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW
10am - 3pm

Monday 5th
Crabtree Ponds Work Day
Crabtree Close, S5 7BJ
10am - 12.30pm

Tuesday 6th
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg Work Day 🗡️
Meeting point varies
10am - 3pm

Thursday 15th
Fungi at Greno Woods: An evening with expert Steve Clements 🌸
Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF
6.30 for 7pm - 9pm

Thank you to everyone who came along to celebrate the 2016-17 year with us at our AGM!

To read more of our highlights from the last year, including a financial summary, download our Annual Review 2016-17 at wildsheffield.com/who-we-are/papers-and-reports

Event Key:
🗡️ Venues or times vary or to be confirmed – check website & contact us 🌸 Online booking essential

Otter © Nick Hurst @bearprintsphoto



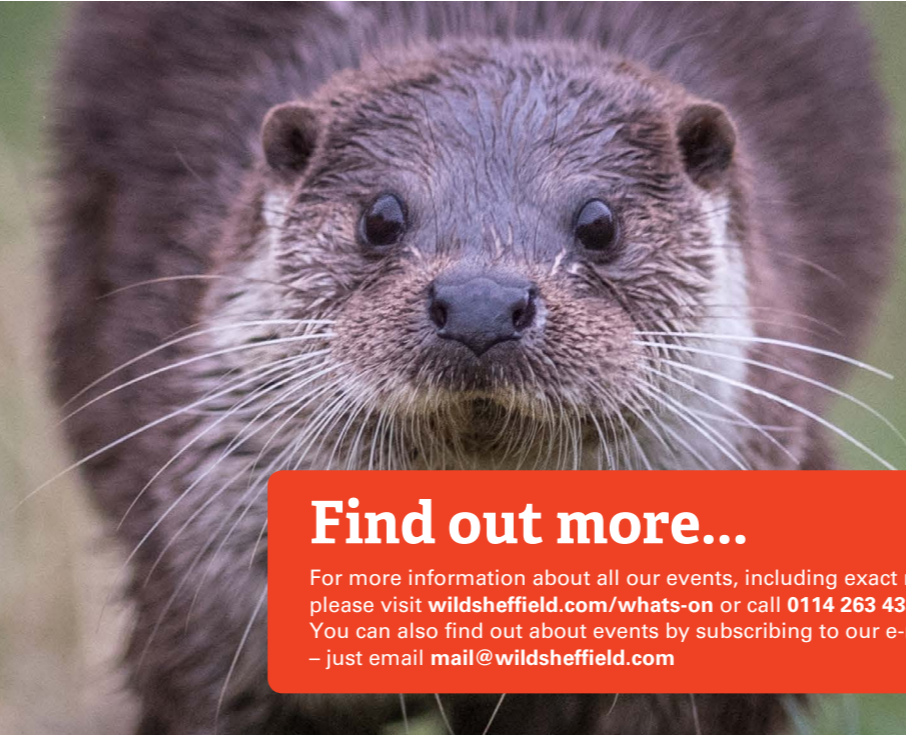
Try your hand at something new – get a taste of volunteering!

Our volunteer taster days are a great opportunity to have a good work out and get closer to the wildlife on our reserves – and our volunteers are a friendly, welcoming bunch!

Community wildlife rangers Rachel and Hannah will be on site ready to chat more about what volunteering involves between 10am and 11am on three days in November at Wyming Brook and Greno Woods. If you like what you hear, you can help out for the rest of the day, too.

We can also provide transport from our depot at Stokes Tiles, Moore Street. Places are limited though, so please email us at nature.reserves@wildsheffield.com to book your place.

Turn to pages 14-15 for more on volunteering with the Trust, or go to wildsheffield.com/volunteering



Find out more...

For more information about all our events, including exact meeting points, please visit wildsheffield.com/whats-on or call 0114 263 4335. You can also find out about events by subscribing to our e-newsletter – just email mail@wildsheffield.com



Get active...

try out volunteering see pages 14-15 or visit wildsheffield.com/volunteering

New projects draw flocks of wildlife fans

We're delighted to have so many people across Sheffield and Rotherham enjoying the benefits of getting closer to nature.



Smashing Shmapped targets

People all over Sheffield have been flocking to download Shmapped, the app which maps the things you love about Sheffield. A whopping 1,400 (and rising) of you downloaded the app, you've joined us for an array of fantastic events, and the photos we've received from 'Shmappers' have been incredible. From sunflowers to owls, street murals to lamp posts, Sheffield has been well and truly mapped!

Researchers at the universities of Sheffield and Derby will soon be going through the results of Shmapped and will announce their conclusions to the public at a meeting in January 2018. After that, the information will be going to city planners and health organisations to make the best use of your recordings and develop Sheffield spaces to be better for everyone. Thank you for all your entries, we hope you've enjoyed it just as much as we have!

Email k.mcewan@derby.ac.uk to register your interest in the Shmapped results.

Stop press! You still have time to enter the Shmapped prize draw.

The first 1,000 Sheffield users who complete 30 days of Shmapped and the follow-up questionnaire will be entered into a prize draw where they will have a 1-in-10 chance of winning a shopping voucher worth up to £500. Download Shmapped from your app store today.

Wild at Heart is blooming!

Our wellbeing activities for older nature lovers are going down a storm! Now in its fourth year, the project has expanded to four weekly hobby-based groups, in Rotherham (Clifton Park), north Sheffield (Longley 4 Greens Community Centre), south Sheffield (Lowedges Sheltered Housing Scheme) and central Sheffield (York House, Manor Fields Park), plus two roving nature photography workshops and one wildlife gardening session every month – reaching almost 1,200 people over the last year alone. Some of these groups are now almost fully subscribed so please do contact us in advance if you're interested in coming along.

We're also on the lookout for volunteers who can commit to half a day per week to support these weekly groups, particularly in Rotherham. To find out more go to wildsheffield.com/volunteer

Green spaces make good neighbours

Over the summer we announced that the Trust, in partnership with Rotherham Borough Council and other community partners, will be launching a new project to connect communities in Rotherham with their local green spaces. Thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund, 'Natural Neighbours' will bring people together through regular activities for all the family at green spaces in four areas of Rotherham: Sandhill Park (Rawmarsh); Winterhills (Kimberworth); Boston Park (near Canklow) and Eldon Road Recreation Ground (near Eastwood). These areas will also be improved through small scale capital works which will make the sites more welcoming, make access routes more obvious, improve safety and celebrate these open spaces as part of the community. Watch out for updates in future editions of *Kingfisher*!



TV naturalist praises innovative outdoor learning in Sheffield

Schools showcase

This year's new intake at Yewlands Academy had a Transition Week with a difference at our Transition Forest School in Greno Woods where they were able to get to know each other "in a way we could never replicate in a classroom environment," according to Y7 Coordinator Lucie Wragg. Watch the full story at wildsheffield.com/transitionforestschool

Pupils from Prince Edward's School have been enjoying weekly Forest School sessions supported by the Trust. The school occupies a brand new site and the woodland garden, brainchild of Science Coordinator Charlotte Varley, has played a vital role in helping the children feel at home.



The Trust's outdoor learning diary was overflowing this autumn, with work in schools supporting teachers' outdoor learning programmes and school trips to our reserves – but one visit stood out from the crowd.

BBC One's *The Really Wild Show* presenter and The Wildlife Trusts' Vice President Nick Baker paid a visit to our new Academy of Danger in Greno Woods, Sheffield. The well-known TV naturalist and writer helped Year 5 pupils from Grenoside Primary in Sheffield tackle the Greno Woods obstacle course – an epic, muddy kilometre packed full of team challenges, including 'The Bog of Doom' and 'Electric Wires', rope obstacles, mud crawls and log carries.

"It is so important to get children connecting with nature on a regular basis."

Nick Baker

"It's so much more than PE in the woods," he said, dripping with mud and sporting a huge grin. "We can all learn outside – the Academy of Danger proves that."

"Outdoor learning has been proven to have both mental and physical benefits as well as improving confidence and self-awareness."

Nick also heard from teachers at Oughtibridge, Grenoside and Lound primary schools about how learning outdoors had helped pupils at their schools improve concentration, social skills and learning outcomes.

Nick's visit was part of a UK-wide tour to showcase some of the innovative approaches being taken to outdoor learning in schools and by Wildlife Trusts across the country.

Find out more about outdoor learning activities run by the Trust at wildsheffield.com/schools

Teach Wild Network: new date announced

If you'd like your school to do more outdoor learning, why not tell them about our Teach Wild Network? The Teach Wild Network brings together educators and outdoor learning experts to help schools in Sheffield and the surrounding areas get outside the classroom more. The next meeting is Wednesday 29th November – and it's at a top-secret location in Sheffield which will be revealed soon!

Find out more at wildsheffield.com/teachwildnetwork



Patrolling the thin green line

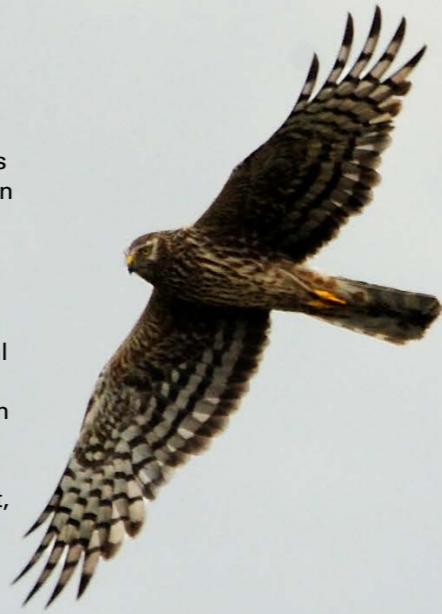
With so many threats to wildlife locally and nationally, it's been a busy time for our campaigns team.

Standing up for hen harriers

Birds of prey are fantastic, awe-inspiring and joyful to see but sadly they are disappearing from our local area. These birds are in decline for a number of reasons, including illegal persecution, declining habitats and the use of rat poison in their territories. One species of most concern is the hen harrier, of which there were only four breeding pairs in the UK last year.

In August we supported Sheffield Environmental in organising and promoting the 2017 Hen Harrier Day Sheffield at Devonshire Green, which attracted over 300 people. We heard from some truly inspirational speakers – writer and campaigner Dr Mark Avery, the University of Sheffield's Dr Ross Cameron, the RSPB's Blánaid Denman, former Green Party Leader Natalie Bennett, and naturalist and *Springwatch* presenter Iolo Williams, all alongside our CEO Liz Ballard, pictured below with the event's organiser, Sheffield Environmental's David Dickinson, and guest, Sheffield Bird Study Group's David Wood.

Visit wildsheffield.com/campaigns for more about how we're standing up to the illegal persecution of wildlife in the near future.



© Amy Lewis

Standing firm on street trees

The long-running Sheffield street trees campaign has escalated recently. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, visited Sheffield in September to meet with the Trust, along with other campaigners.

The Trust has also continued to question Sheffield City Council and Amey directly about their actions on street trees, particularly where we have concerns for wildlife, such as their decision to fell the Chelsea Road elm tree in Nether Edge which hosts a colony of White-letter Hairstreak butterflies. We continue to oppose the Council's approach to managing this surviving elm tree: keeping the elm tree is the simplest approach to retaining the butterflies. Sadly, against all our recommendations, the Council is still planning to reduce the canopy of the elm tree and to fell it in 2018.

As well as challenging this decision, we called on the Council in July to produce a clear and written plan of action for the protection of the butterfly colony. After receiving and commenting on the plan, we also requested that our own experts and those of the Butterfly Conservation Trust be present during the works to oversee and carry out the removal of White-letter Hairstreak eggs from felled branches, in order to move them to a new host elm tree. We were pleased that the Council agreed to this.

We have carefully considered our involvement in this activity, which we believe will significantly increase the likelihood of success of the butterfly eggs establishing elsewhere. This is not an endorsement of the Council's course of action – and we continue to urge that the simplest way of saving the butterfly is to retain the tree.



© Yorkshire Post Newspapers



Save Smithy Wood

Following news of a second proposal to build a motorway service area at Junction 33 on the M1, representatives of the original Smithy Wood service area proposal wrote to Sheffield City Council suggesting there should be a finite amount of time for the new proposal to be considered viable by Rotherham Council, and asked for their planning application to be placed on hold until this time was reached.

The formal application for the Junction 33 proposal has now been submitted and our response can be found at wildsheffield.com/smithywood

News in brief...

HS2

The government announced in July that it had chosen the final route for the HS2 rail network in South Yorkshire, which is the new M1/M18 route proposed and consulted on last year. We have responded to a consultation on the draft Environmental Impact Assessment scope and methodology.

Brexit

After we leave the EU, the UK's existing laws protecting our important wildlife habitats – like Blacka Moor and Wyming Brook – may be under threat without the added protection of the European Nature Directives. In September, MPs debated the Repeal Bill, designed to end our membership of the EU. There are real risks to wildlife from the Repeal Bill, so we've been asking people to ask their MP to keep the vital wildlife protections we have now for our wildlife and wild places. If you haven't done so yet, please write to your MP and share it with us at takeaction@wildsheffield.com



Fracking

Although no fracking is currently taking place within our operating area, and Sheffield City Council has also passed a motion rejecting any applications for fracking on council-owned land, testing is currently taking place on the borders of our operating area. We are continuing to monitor licenses approved for Sheffield and Rotherham. If they are, and applications to frack are made, we will comment, object or lobby local government for the strictest regulations and controls, and keep you informed.

Sheffield Flood Protection Schemes

Further consultation on these controversial schemes have now been delayed until 2018. We will keep you updated. We still have ecological concerns in particular about three schemes and will engage with the authorities and local groups to try ensure the minimum ecological impact from the proposals.

Sheffield Trees and Woodlands Strategy

Sheffield City Council has delayed the publication of its anticipated Trees and Woodlands Strategy until March 2018. This is to allow the Council to carry out some valuation of the tree resource using the i-Tree Eco assessment. Although the delay is frustrating, the assessment is something that we and others have called for so we welcome this investment.



Contact our campaigns team...

@WildSheffield

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust

Email us with your views at takeaction@wildsheffield.com

wildsheffield.com/campaigns



What's stopping you?

Volunteering. We all know it's a good thing, but few of us ever feel we have the time. So what motivates our volunteers to take time out and lend a hand? And could you see yourself in their shoes? *Kingfisher* chatted with our land management volunteer, George Lee-Harris, to find out more.



© Nabil Abbas

Kingfisher: So why do you think people decide to start volunteering?

George: I've worked with lots of different Wildlife Trust volunteers from different walks of life, and the path that each of them has taken to becoming a volunteer is complex and personal, and often not without its ups and downs. Invariably they all want to find a sense of community or friendship, to feel better by spending more time outdoors, to learn practical skills and get closer to the wildlife they love. They take their first step when they realise it's not as time-consuming, or as daunting, as they first thought. Personally, I started volunteering because I wanted to get experience working in the environmental sector. I wanted to work with nature in the future, so volunteering with Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust seemed a great way to gain some insight into what working in an outdoor, nature-based job would be like.

Kingfisher: What kinds of things do you do as a volunteer?

George: Before I started, I didn't know anything about the reality of managing nature reserves and that was quite off-putting because I didn't know what I'd be asked to do as a volunteer. Now I know that you quickly learn from more experienced volunteers and staff members, who are great at sharing their knowledge in a friendly way. The volunteers on nature reserves do a wide range of practical jobs. One day you can be clearing foliage around paths and moving fallen trees and branches, the next you can be building fences, planting hedges or putting in boardwalks, bridges or stiles. It's good to know that for each of these jobs there are always less demanding roles to be taken, as well as more challenging ones. If we're putting in a new sign, the digging is hard work, but we still need someone to hold the post while it's backfilled!

Kingfisher: What do you feel you get in return for volunteering?

George: For me, the most rewarding part of volunteering with the nature reserves team is that I get to spend a lot of time on the Trust's nature reserves. I hadn't visited any of these before I started to volunteer and I was amazed to find such a variety of natural spaces and rich habitats so close to home. Through working on and with these spaces, and getting to know them, I now feel connected to Sheffield and the surrounding area in a way I had never experienced before.

I think that this connection with local nature has been really beneficial for my mental wellbeing. It's also given me a sense of community, putting me in a mix of people with backgrounds that I might not normally have connected with, but who all share a common passion for the local natural environment.

I'm now passing my skills and experience onto new volunteers – and that's a real confidence boost. Volunteering my time for a cause I believe in has made such a positive difference in my life – and I now feel connected to nature all the more for it.

Volunteer Taster Days

Find dates on pages 8-9



© Beth Clark

Here at the Trust, volunteering is our lifeblood. Donations of time are, without a doubt, one of the most valuable ways people can help support our work. We rely on your help to care for our reserves and the wildlife found on them. Every hour you give us is precious – whether it's once a week, once a month or just once in awhile.



Volunteer Taster Days

Why not come along to one of the volunteer taster days organised by our nature reserves team? Everyone is welcome and no experience is needed.

They are designed to give you a taste of what volunteering might involve – with no need to commit to anything beyond the first hour, though you can choose to stay for the day. With our community wildlife rangers on hand to answer any questions you might have about volunteering, they're a really easy way to see if volunteering is for you. If you decide to come back for more, there's no pressure to commit to more days than you can, and the team can work flexibly around your availability.



© David Shapiro

Volunteer Work Days

If you're already keen to volunteer, then volunteer work days are a good place to start. They are an opportunity to head down to one of our reserves, and spend the day doing practical conservation work. They are a great way to help us look after our fantastic nature reserves, as well as get some healthy exercise and meet some wonderful people! Again, everyone is welcome, no experience is needed and we will provide equipment and training. Come along for the whole day or just for an hour or two.

Find out more...

Turn to pages 8-9 for dates of our volunteer taster days and keep an eye on **wildsheffield.com/whats-on** for dates of taster days and work days near you.

Find your local reserve using our handy map at **wildsheffield.com/wildlife/reserves**

If you have any questions email **nature.reserves@wildsheffield.com** or call **0114 263 4335** and ask for one of our community wildlife rangers.

For more information about volunteering with the Trust, go to **wildsheffield.com/volunteering**

Gifts for wildlife this Christmas



Gift membership

Buy a year's membership of the Trust for a loved one by Sunday 24th December and receive either The Wildlife Trusts 2018 calendar or our *Wildlife Walks* book, FREE. Find out more at wildsheffield.com/gift_membership

Recycle for wildlife

Donations of unwanted mobile phones and used inkjet cartridges raise hundreds of pounds for our reserves. Send them to 37 Stafford Road, Sheffield, S2 2SF – or pass to a member of staff.

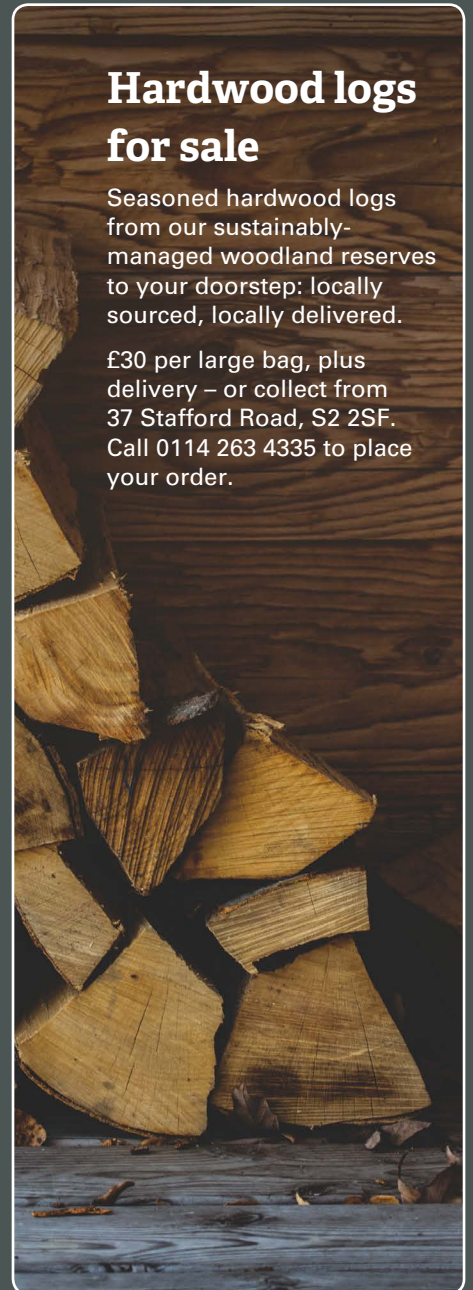


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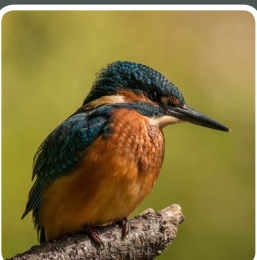
Hardwood logs for sale

Seasoned hardwood logs from our sustainably-managed woodland reserves to your doorstep: locally sourced, locally delivered.

£30 per large bag, plus delivery – or collect from 37 Stafford Road, S2 2SF. Call 0114 263 4335 to place your order.



Your autumn wildlife in pictures...



Kingfisher on the River Don
@buggs01



Little owl peekaboo
@Gez_Robinson



My badgers in #Sheffield
@SteveJDowson



Tachypodoiulus niger
colour variation
@pedesnpods

Be social...

share your sightings with us online, use **#lovewildlife** and tag **@WildSheffield**

