



Sheffield &  
Rotherham

# Kingfisher

## In this edition...

Sheffield's moors  
on the brink?

Curlew and  
crane's-bill

New toddler trail  
launched

Issue 96 Spring 2018

*For nature, for everyone*



How you  
can help...

## Help protect moorland wildlife

Report snares  
Join in Hen Harrier Day  
Sign our petition

More on page 5

For other ways you can support us, visit  
[wildsheffield.com/how-you-can-help](http://wildsheffield.com/how-you-can-help)

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Find out more  
**wildsheffield.com**

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Front cover image: Mountain hare by Mark Hamblin/2020VISION

Back cover images: Wildlife gardens and brown bat by Tom Marshall, house sparrow by Margaret Holland



A big thank you to all  
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Sheffield Town Trust



Building communities. Transforming lives.





In January we finally saw the launch of the government's 25 year environment plan. It's a significant document with a lot of positive messages, but our concern is how it will translate into to action on the ground. The Wildlife Trusts are working hard nationally to influence the government and secure legislation to support the plan – the coming year will be very important for determining our future wildlife legislation.

With that in mind and the bird nesting season ahead, we have been particularly turning our attention to our Sheffield moors – the fantastic uplands to the west of the city that stretch from Langsett to Longshaw (nearly) and from the urban fringe all the way to the Upper Derwent. Increasingly, our members and the public are contacting us about their concerns for our moors and the wildlife they support. Whilst there has been some fantastic work done by local landowners – Moors for the Future, the National Trust and others – to restore this internationally important habitat, we are still missing our wildlife. We are seeing the unprecedented 'disappearance' of mountain hares in large numbers as well as very few breeding birds of prey: peregrine, short-eared owls, hen harriers are all 'missing'. We want to raise awareness of these issues, and of how our moorlands are managed, and ask for your help to take action for wildlife. Please turn to our article on p4 to find out more.

On a more positive note, I am extremely pleased to write that you have helped protect another small piece of semi-natural ancient woodland on the edge of Sheffield. With your support, we are in the process of purchasing Low Spring Wood, next door to Greno Woods, further extending this fantastic woodland landscape and protecting it for years to come. Read more about this on page 14. And finally, we would also like to extend a warm invitation to the launch of the Sheffield State of Nature report – more on page 9.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support. Please get in contact if you want to raise any issues or share your views about our work.

**Liz Ballard**  
Chief Executive

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The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development:  
Europe investing in rural areas



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.







# Rags or riches?

## Sheffield's moors on the brink

**Kingfisher** editor Jane Campbell explores the uncertain future of Sheffield's upland treasures.

Heavy droplets of water glint on clumps of moor grass as we climb up above Langsett Reservoir. Red grouse issue their distinctive cackle as they glide from dry stone walls and a lone kestrel hovers silently above the mist-clad heather. It's ethereal and stunning.

Frances and Steve Tivey have worked and walked these moors to the north west of Sheffield for decades. Both retired rangers, today they have invited me out on one of their regular forays. "It's some of the most beautiful moorland in England," says Frances as they pepper me with anecdotes about the landscape around us. "It's just brilliant that we can roam so freely in such a wild place and still be less than an hour from Sheffield city centre. On warm summer days it's so quiet you can hear the bracken crackle as it unfurls."

On a grey day like this, one of the key roles of our local moorlands is plainly visible beneath our feet. As well as the dark damp peat, we see mounds of saturated, pale green sphagnum moss. Together the peat and sphagnum combine to ensure our British uplands work as a huge sponge and natural water filter, saving our pennies by cleaning over 70 per cent of the UK's drinking water on its way down the hills to the treatment plant. Their ability to store water is tremendous, holding back vast amounts of rainwater that otherwise might contribute to flood waters that threaten our homes and businesses.

**70%** of world's heather moorland and 13% of world's blanket bog found in the UK

**70%** of UK drinking water comes from upland areas

**80%** of UK's peatland is now degraded by human intervention

**53%** of UK SSSIs are in upland areas

IUCN UK National Committee Peatland Programme; Natural England Uplands Strategic Standard

Upland areas like the Sheffield moorlands are internationally important for their unique habitats and wildlife and are covered by European designations: Special Protected Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The mix of blanket bog and dry heath, with flushes, streams and rocky edges, creates a mosaic habitat that supports many important species including merlin, peregrine and short-eared owl. Blanket bog is particularly important in the UK (where we have 13 per cent of the world's deep peat blanket bog) as it supports many rare, threatened or declining plants and animals – including an exceptionally high proportion of protected bird species, like hen harrier, golden plover and ring ouzel. Around 40 per cent of the UK's large heath butterfly population is found on blanket bog.

These statistics are even more concerning when you realise that, after more than 200 years of neglect and mistreatment, very little UK peatland bog is currently performing to its full potential. "You can see where the peat is drying up and being eroded here," points out Frances as we pass a swathe of bare and cracked soil.

It's a telling sign of a national trend. Across the UK, disjointed land ownership and conflicting moorland management styles have led to a loss of peat bog and associated biodiversity. Over 80 per cent of the UK's peatland has been affected in some way by drainage, fire, grazing or extraction, according to the IUCN Peatland Programme. And whilst there has been significant progress in terms of peatland habitat restoration on some of our Sheffield moors, we are still missing our local wildlife. ►

Mountain Hare by Mark Hamblin/2020VISION



"We used to see hen harriers on Broomhead Moor – but I reckon about the early 1990s they started to vanish," says Steve pointing across the valley. "It's the same on Midhope Moor – you used to be able to rely on seeing a mountain hare here but now it's really rare. And I haven't seen peregrines breeding near here for the last few years either."

"Snares are another issue for people like us who love moorland wildlife" says Frances. "We've seen them with our own eyes quite near here." I nod: the Trust has come across evidence of densely-packed snares and stink pits too – small fenced areas filled with snares and rotting wildlife carcasses to indiscriminately attract other wildlife to be snared. We have grave concerns about the excessive use of traps and snares, which we believe have contributed to a significant decline in the local mountain hare population. Last year, Sorby Natural History Society reported that in one annual recording session just two mountain hares had been found to the east of Broomhead Moors, Hobson Moss and Dukes Drive, where in past years dozens had been seen. We have also found many snares set along the boundaries of our nature reserves, which is of great concern, especially where protected species such as badgers are known to be active.

Excessive predator control alongside inappropriate burning, drainage and over-grazing are intensive upland management practices that are coming under the spotlight as the UK decides the future of moorland management after Brexit. The government's 25 year plan for the environment (see page 12), announced in January, recognises the importance of natural capital. A new environmental land management system could herald a sea-change for our local countryside and especially our Sheffield moors. If best practice is followed, we could see the UK's uplands managed for the environmental services, like carbon and water retention, we so badly need. But crucially, we also need these uplands to support a more natural ecosystem – one where hen harriers sky dance, peregrines nest and mountain hares are once again an everyday sight for Sheffielders visiting their local moors.

It's clear that the future of our moorlands and the wildlife they support now hangs in the balance. There has been huge progress, led by conservation organisations, to understand and maximise the economic contribution healthy uplands make to society. It's up to us now – to everyone who cares for our natural world – to determine what kind of upland landscape and wildlife we want to see in the future.

Steve bends down and dislodges a nondescript stone and hands it to me. "That's a piece of neolithic flint, probably left here by Stone Age traders. It's proof that people have been walking this path for more than 5,000 years." As I clutch the smooth alien treasure in my hand I offer up a silent plea to the powers that be that these precious moorlands, which have provided both people and wildlife with so much over the course of human history, can be allowed to serve us all for just as long into the future.



Local stink pit with mountain hares – a European protected species and UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species

## How can you help protect moorland wildlife?



Hen harrier by Mark Hamblin/2020VISION

Find out more about these issues and how you can take action at [wildsheffield.com/ourmoors](http://wildsheffield.com/ourmoors)

**REPORT SNARES:** January to May is peak snare season, as grouse and pheasant chicks are raised. If you find one, take a photo and a grid reference – or make sure the photo is GPS-tagged. Report your snare sightings and find out what to do if you see a snare on our website above.

**VISIT BLACKA MOOR:** Our Blacka Moor nature reserve is a great example of an upland habitat mosaic, including Cowsick bog, heather moorland and varied woodland – and never managed by burning (go to pages 8-9 for events at Blacka Moor).

**SAVE THE DATE:** Hen Harrier Day events are planned in Sheffield on 4 and 12 August 2018. More coming soon on Twitter and Facebook.

**WRITE TO YOUR MP:** Tell them what the Sheffield moors and their wildlife mean to you and ask for an environmental land management system and legislation that brings our missing wildlife back to our uplands.

**SIGN OUR PETITION:** Help us call for an end to intensive moorland management on our Sheffield moors.


**And don't forget to spread the word! Share our posts and tweets about Sheffield's uplands**



Sphagnum moss by Mark Hamblin/2020VISION



Curlew on Sheffield moorland by Steve Williams



# Curlews and crane's-bill

## This spring, watch out for the wildlife you helped to thrive

After the long winter months, it's always exciting to look forward to a spot of spring birding. As the summer migrants arrive, our year-round residents respond by putting on their finery and best voices. We're always busy over winter at the Trust, making improvements to help care for the birds and other wildlife we all love to see in the spring. Thanks to your valuable support, this winter we have been able to do even more for our area's wetland and meadow habitats.

Curlews and other wading birds will feel the benefit of five new wet scrapes at Blacka Moor's Strawberry Lea pastures, close to one of the sources of the River Sheaf on the moors to the west of Sheffield.

These scrapes – shallow water-filled depressions – will support a range of insects and other invertebrates, providing an important source of food for wading birds and their chicks. The curlew that breed in the immediate vicinity of the pastures will benefit particularly from this new food source, and the scrapes will be an added attraction for migrating waders such as lapwing as they move from their lowland wintering grounds up to breed on the high moors.

At Woodhouse Washlands on the boundary of Sheffield and Rotherham, wetland restoration work has provided further habitat improvements for wetland wildlife including great crested newt, grass snake, reed warbler and snipe. The project saw the creation of nine new ponds, restoration of two existing ponds and extension of the network of wet ditches this winter, thanks to funding from Viridor Credits. The newts in particular were in for a special treat, with four new newt hibernacula – specially designed shelters which provide newts with a safe place to spend the winter.

We're always trying to make it easier for you to get closer to nature, and at Woodhouse Washlands we took the opportunity to resurface and improve one particularly waterlogged path this winter. We've also opened up views and, by the time you read this, we're hoping to be well on the way to installing two new interpretation panels and a series of waymarkers, to help you find your way around the reserve.

As well as wetland wildlife, we hope you'll be seeing improvements to crane's-bill and other wildflowers at Carr House Meadows this summer, following the completion of our project to improve the site and restore the meadows.

Wildflower meadows across the UK have seen a 97 per cent decrease nationally since World War Two – so the meadows at Carr House in the Ewden valley to Sheffield's north west are a rare example of a much-loved landscape feature that was once a common sight.

Songbirds such as skylark and meadow pipit will also benefit from this project, which has seen 100m of hedges laid in traditional style. These birds will also enjoy better shelter and more plentiful food in the larger patches of young scrub that we created by making it easier for cattle to access certain areas of the site.

If you're out and about in the area this spring, we would love to see your wildlife snaps. Your support makes caring for these precious landscapes possible – so we want you to enjoy them too!

Share your  
sightings



Reed warbler by Chris Omersall/2020VISION



# Return of the elm

Exciting plans are afoot at the Trust to create a Sheffield colony of disease-resistant elm trees at our Greno Woods nature reserve, thanks to a campaign led by local tree-champion Paul Selby. Inspired by the Chelsea Road elm tree, which survived the ravages of Dutch elm disease that laid waste to 25-30 million elm trees in the 1970s, Paul crowdfunded the planting of eight varieties of resistant elms in trial plots at the reserve this winter.

This project is part of a UK-wide trial led by Dr David Herling, a Dutch elm disease expert who has spent 40 years developing disease resistant elm trees. Dr Herling now aims to establish experimental colonies of these elms throughout the UK in order to understand which clones perform best in a range of environmental conditions; the project's results will ultimately inform which varieties are made available for restocking the nation's landscapes.

Like the rabbit, the English elm (*Ulmus procera*) is thought to have been introduced into the UK by the Romans. Resistant English elm hybrids are found, in low numbers, in parks and towns including Sheffield. It is exciting to think that, 40 years after they were lost, this iconic species may again be returned to our landscape.



## March

### 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

### Thursday 15th

**Fungi of Greno Woods** ✨  
Join local fungi experts and our Greno Woods Manager for this inspiring evening about the fascinating fungi of Greno Woods from incredible slime moulds to beautiful crust fungi!  
37 Stafford Road  
6.30 for 7 - 9pm

### Friday 16th

**Woodhouse Washlands Work Day** 🍷  
Meeting point varies  
10am - 3pm

### Sunday 18th

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

### Friday 23rd

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

### Saturday 24th

**Blacka Moor User Forum** 🍷  
Venue to be confirmed  
10am - 12noon

### Wednesday 28th

**Sunnybank Work Day**  
Broomhall Place, S10 2DG  
10am - 12noon

### Thursday 29th

**Woodhouse Washlands User Forum** 🍷  
Venue to be confirmed  
6 - 7.30pm

## April

### Tuesday 3rd

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

**Ecclesall Woods Wild Play** ✨  
Woodland Discovery Centre  
10am - 12noon

**Ecclesall Woods Wild Play** ✨  
Woodland Discovery Centre  
1 - 3pm

### Wednesday 4th

**Ecclesall Woods Wild Play** ✨  
Woodland Discovery Centre  
10am - 12noon

### Saturday 7th

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

### Tuesday 10th

**Ecclesall Woods Wild Play** ✨  
Woodland Discovery Centre  
10am - 12noon

**Ecclesall Woods Wild Play** ✨  
Woodland Discovery Centre  
1 - 3pm

### Wednesday 11th

**Ecclesall Woods Wild Play** ✨  
Woodland Discovery Centre  
10am - 12noon

### Thursday 12th

**Greno Woods Toddler Trail Launch** ✨  
Woodhead Road car park, S35 8RS  
10am - 12noon

### Thursday 12th

**Alien invaders** ✨  
A host of new invertebrates to the Sheffield area have made their home in our backyard, largely unnoticed. Do they come in peace? How can we recognise them and what should we do about them? This is natural history, but not as we know it. Science, with a sprinkling of science fiction.  
37 Stafford Road  
6.30 for 7 - 9pm

### Tuesday 17th

**Bat Surveys: An Introduction** ✨

Join bat specialist Jon Goodrick for a day's training on bat identification, ecology and survey techniques. Learn how to plan, conduct and write up a bat survey. Build identification skills in a classroom-based workshop, then test out your techniques in the field. There will also be an optional evening bat survey, subject to suitable weather conditions, which could last through to 11pm.  
37 Stafford Road  
12noon - 6.30pm

### Thursday 19th

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

### Friday 20th

**An Introduction to Phase 1 Habitat Surveys** ✨

Join ecologist Julie Riley for a day's training on Phase 1 Habitat Surveys - an essential skill for quickly surveying and mapping habitat types. Learn how to plan, conduct and write up a Phase 1 habitat survey. There will be a classroom-based session in the morning, after which you can practice techniques in a practical field session in the afternoon.  
37 Stafford Road  
9.30am - 4pm

#### Event Key:

🍷 Venues or times vary or to be confirmed - check website & contact us ✨ Online booking essential



### Help out in the fresh air this spring!

Our work days are a great opportunity to get some fresh air and get closer to the wildlife on our reserves - and our volunteers are a friendly, welcoming bunch! Community rangers Rachel and Morwenna will be on site to welcome you.

For more information go to [wildsheffield.com/volunteering](http://wildsheffield.com/volunteering)



### 15% discount at Cotswold Outdoor

Supporters of The Wildlife Trusts can claim 15 per cent off in-store and online. To claim in-store, present your membership ID at the checkout, or use code **AF-WILDLIFE-M5** online.



**Friday 20th****Woodhouse Washlands****Work Day**

Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW  
10am - 3pm

**Saturday 21st****Moss Valley Woodlands Reserve Advisory Group**

Meet Hazlehurst Lane layby,  
S8 8DZ  
10am - 1pm

**Friday 27th****Launch of the Sheffield State of Nature report**

Join us to celebrate the culmination of our two-year Nature Counts project.  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Evening (times TBC)

**May****Saturday 5th****Blacka Moor Work Day**

Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW  
10am - 3pm

**Thursday 17th****Blacka Moor Work Day**

Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW  
10am - 3pm

**Friday 18th****Woodhouse Washlands****Work Day**

Meeting point varies  
10am - 3pm

**Tuesday 29th****Ecclesall Woods Wild Play**

Woodland Discovery Centre  
10am - 12noon

**Ecclesall Woods Wild Play**

Woodland Discovery Centre  
1 - 3pm

**Wednesday 30th****Ecclesall Woods Wild Play**

Woodland Discovery Centre  
10am - 12noon

**June****June means**

**#30DaysWild time! Do something wild every day throughout June!**

Find out more at

[wildsheffield.com/30dayswild](http://wildsheffield.com/30dayswild)

**Saturday 2nd****Blacka Moor Work Day**

Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW  
10am - 3pm

**Thursday 7th****Moss Valley Woodlands****Work Day**

Meet Hazlehurst Lane layby,  
S8 8DZ  
10am - 3pm

**Friday 15th****Woodhouse Washlands****Work Day**

Meeting point varies  
10am - 3pm

**Sunday 17th****The Big Wild Weekend****Greno Family Day Out**

Join us to celebrate 30 Days Wild on Father's Day in the great outdoors.  
Woodhead Road Car Park  
S35 8RS  
11am - 3pm

**Thursday 21st****Blacka Moor Work Day**

Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW  
10am - 3pm

**Wednesday 20th****Moth Watch at Greno Woods**

Meeting point TBC  
8.30pm start

**Thursday 28th****Dragonflies & Damselflies at****Woodhouse Washlands**

Meet at reserve entrance,  
Furnace Road, Sheffield  
SK431855  
11am - 1pm

**Saturday 30th****Photography at Carr House****Meadows**

Meeting point TBC  
10.30am - 12.30pm

**July****Thursday 5th****Moss Valley Woodlands****Work Day**

Meet Hazlehurst Lane layby,  
S8 8DZ  
10am - 3pm

**Saturday 7th****Blacka Moor Work Day**

Stony Ridge car park, S11 7TW  
10am - 3pm

**Monday 9th****Centenary Riverside Picnic**

Meeting point TBC  
11am - 2pm

**Find out more...**

For more information about all our events, including exact meeting points, please visit [wildsheffield.com/whats-on](http://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](mailto:mail@wildsheffield.com)



Sheffield & Rotherham



Short-eared owl by Steve Williams

Find out more...







## Help shape Rotherham's green spaces

Find out more at  
[wildsheffield.com/naturalneighbours](http://wildsheffield.com/naturalneighbours)

Rotherham-based residents, community groups and local businesses have the chance to help shape their local green spaces this spring thanks to funding from the National Lottery, as part of the Natural Neighbours local networks, one aspect of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust's project to connect communities in Rotherham with their local green spaces.

"We want to bring together groups of residents and partner organisations to help shape the improvements these green spaces will undergo through the project," explained Natural Neighbours Project Officer Owen Hodgkinson. "By sharing information and stories about their experiences of Rotherham's parks, we hope these communities will help give Rotherham a lasting legacy they can really be proud of."

## From goshawks to a flood lab - what next for Sheffield's Lakeland?

Our Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership has recently published the list of projects it will be running over the next five years to protect and enhance this outstanding example of a living landscape in north west Sheffield. Following an online consultation and stakeholder event at the end of January, the partnership will be producing a report on the shortlisted projects and also launching a new community grant scheme. From a natural flood management laboratory to bringing goshawk back from the brink, the partnership will be supporting a myriad of projects, which will start to roll out from October 2018. For more information go to [facebook.com/SheffieldLakeland](https://facebook.com/SheffieldLakeland)







## New toddler trail launches in Greno Woods

A new outdoor play destination is launching in north Sheffield this Easter, in the form of the enchanted forest trail – purpose-built for toddlers and young children in the Trust's Greno Woods nature reserve. The experience, designed to help the under fives explore this woodland reserve, is themed around the tradition of the green man – a figure of English folklore and a herald of the land's renewal in spring.

Beautiful green man carvings by Sheffield-based sculptor Paul Casson-Yardley provide a helpful spotting game to encourage little legs along the way, and they also set challenges: to build homes for gnomes, pass through labyrinths and overcome obstacles. It ends by a picnic bench, ready to receive weary travellers.

Funded by the European Regional Development Fund's LEADER programme, and Veolia Environmental Trust, the trail is the brainchild of the Trust's Land Management Officer Pete Tomlin.

Pete recalls, "Back in 2016 I was on holiday with my one year old son. It was my first holiday with a toddler, and he needed to run around outside every day. Over the course of the week we visited three different activity trails for young kids, and had incredible amounts of fun. I came back thinking 'we've got to have one of those on our reserves!'. This project has been a real personal journey, and I'm very proud of the outcome. I'm looking forward to taking my son on the trail, and hope that our members will bring their own little ones to Greno for an adventure too!"

This recent addition joins a whole host of other activities for young people at Greno Woods. There are three permanent family-friendly orienteering courses set by South Yorkshire Orienteers, our Greno Woods App provides themed walks for families and our Greno Woods outdoor learning site offers experiences for schools, from high-adrenaline obstacle course racing to river studies and fieldwork skills, thanks to generous funding from players of People's Postcode Lottery.

So what are you waiting for? Come along and explore the woods today!

Try out the enchanted forest trail  
on **Thursday 12th April**  
(see pages 8-9)

Find out more about  
the trail and how to find it at  
[wildsheffield.com/  
enchantedforesttrail](http://wildsheffield.com/enchantedforesttrail)

Download an orienteering  
map of Greno Woods at  
[wildsheffield.com/  
orienteering\\_greno](http://wildsheffield.com/orienteering_greno)

**"Up ahead, the  
twisted track -  
once you start, do  
not look back!"**



## News in Brief

### Smithy Wood

We are still unsure as to when a decision will be made by Rotherham Council on the planning application for an alternative motorway service area (MSA) site at Junction 33 of the M1. It was due to be at least March, based on the need to source complicated highways information.

### Street trees

Earlier in the year, the Trust took the difficult decision to be involved in the Council's White-letter Hairstreak butterfly mitigation plan for the Chelsea Road elm tree. The Council and Amey had already decided to reduce the elm tree canopy for essential health and safety reasons. We are pleased that the negotiations over the last few weeks by the Trust and local campaigners with the Streets Ahead team led to an agreement to remove only the most decayed material from the tree in late February, leaving the majority of the branches most likely to host the White-letter Hairstreak eggs on the tree. As a result only two eggs were found by our volunteers on the removed branches. We have identified a number of potential host trees and are considering the best course of action around the changing weather.

### Sheffield Flood Protection

Funding for this programme has been reduced, which means that Mayfield and Loxley Local Wildlife Sites are no longer being considered as sites for large flood barriers. Only Rivelin Roscoe Local Wildlife Site remains under threat. We will continue to campaign for the protection of this valley and the development of natural flood management solutions.

### Fracking

The Wildlife Trusts have decided nationally to oppose fracking based on new evidence from the Committee on Climate Change. Our local position statement is in line with this and can be found on our website.

# A greener Sheffield and Rotherham?

What does the government's recent 25 year environment plan mean for local wildlife?



In 2016, the UK's State of Nature report revealed that the UK is among the most nature-depleted countries in the world. This January, the government published A Green Future, its new 25 year environment plan, and its answer to this national environmental crisis.

At the time, the plan came under immediate fire for its response to the issue of single use plastics; the subject of 'avoidable plastic waste' dominated many of its messages relating to wildlife conservation and land management.

Here at the Trust, we cautiously welcomed the government's plan: "It shows good intentions to restore the natural environment," responded the Trust's CEO Liz Ballard, "but it is now essential that it is supported by commitment, detail, resourcing and robust legislation through an Environment Act."

Many of the proposals in the plan have particular resonance for people in Sheffield and Rotherham. With street trees hitting the national news, and plans for HS2 impacting several local wildlife sites, national environmental policy has rarely seemed so tangible in our daily lives. So what could 'A Green Future' mean for your local wildlife?

### More wildlife-rich habitat

The government plans to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat in addition to the existing network of local wildlife sites. This plan to establish a 'natural environmental recovery network' will be key to ensuring we can build on our living landscapes work to provide local wildlife with a potential 'network for nature', linking up local nature reserves like Blacka Moor and Wyming Brook and ensuring that local wildlife can thrive.

### Recognition of natural flood risk management

The plan commits to testing, encouraging and embedding natural flood risk management solutions – which is an approach we warmly welcome. We have been delivering natural flood protection for years at sites such as Centenary Riverside, and more recently we have urged Sheffield City Council to incorporate this approach into its 'Protecting Sheffield from Flooding' scheme.

### A new environmental land management scheme, based on natural capital

With the country's exit from the EU on the horizon, a new land management system for our countryside, to replace Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments, is vital. This is an opportunity to embed conservation principles at the heart of all land management, and the Trust hopes that the plan's emphasis on 'natural capital' will see the natural environment properly valued within the new funding system, which will run until 2024. We need to ensure that local sites such as Woodhouse Washlands and Kilnhurst Ings have more targeted investment to support habitats and ecosystems for wildlife and people.





Blacka Moor by L Ballard and (opposite page) Greno Woods by Helena Dolby

### A new Northern Forest and 11 million trees

The plan promises to see 11 million trees plus a further one million urban trees planted and backs a new 'Northern Forest' along the M62 corridor. We are keen to work with partners to help take forward the Northern Forest in South Yorkshire but identifying land and funding will be key to the successful delivery of this idea.

### New consultation requirements for street trees and a National Tree Champion

Nowhere is the value of street trees for people and wildlife more evident than here in Sheffield, and we have consistently questioned Sheffield City Council's approach to street tree management. We welcome the new National Tree Champion and, more importantly, the new requirement on councils to consult when they wish to cut down street trees. Whilst the approach in Sheffield continues without abatement, we hope this will lead to more transparent and better conceived urban street tree management plans across the country in the future.

### A net gain for the environment from every housing and infrastructure development

The plan proposes a 'net environmental gain principle' for development that we hope will support our work in ensuring that planning applications in Sheffield and Rotherham prevent harm to wildlife and create opportunities for biodiversity gain. The Wildlife Trusts' recent 'Housing Vision' also sets out similar goals for sustainable development.

### A thriving, protected green belt with a new network of community woodlands

The plan reinforces the government's commitment to protect green belt land and promises to protect ancient woodlands and grasslands whilst enhancing green belt land for people to use and enjoy. This commitment is very welcome in light of Sheffield's draft Local Plan, which considers the future location of around 43,000 new homes in Sheffield to be built up to 2034, including potential green belt locations around Norton and along the Upper Don Valley. The next round of consultation on the Local Plan and Green Belt Review is due in summer 2018.



### Contact our campaigns team

 @WildSheffield

 Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust

 Email us with your views at [takeaction@wildsheffield.com](mailto:takeaction@wildsheffield.com)

 [wildsheffield.com/campaigns](http://wildsheffield.com/campaigns)



# We've got a new spring in our step

## Introducing Low Spring Wood - our newest reserve

Back in 2012 the Trust purchased 170 glorious hectares of Greno Woods thanks to your support and all those who contributed to our appeal. Greno Woods is beloved of walkers, mountain bikers and horse-riders alike. However, it's not just its recreational value that makes it such a special place. The Grenoside Woods complex - which includes Wharncliffe, Wheata and Greno Woods - covers 700 hectares and is the largest area of woodland with high biodiversity value in Yorkshire. It's this huge expanse of habitat that makes this area so valuable, and enables the woodland to provide homes and highways for thousands of wildlife species that would simply not survive in a more fragmented landscape. Add to this its unique historical features and, as Sheffield Hallam University's Professor Melvyn Jones puts it, it becomes "not just a bunch of trees, but a historic site just as important as a cathedral or castle".

You can imagine then how excited we were at the Trust when a further 5 hectares came up for sale in the Grenoside Woods complex, in the form of ancient woodland and registered Local Wildlife Site Low Spring Wood.

However, the sale was also a concern. Low Spring Wood was on the open market, and vulnerable. Ancient woodland provides a refuge to more wildlife under threat than any other landscape habitat in the UK and its complex ecosystem cannot be replaced by planting. This essential habitat is facing threat from development right across the country, and nearby ancient woodland at Smithy Wood, visible from Low Spring Wood across the valley, is still under threat from development of a motorway service area (see page 12). ►

Wood Warbler by Andy Rouse/2020VISION  
Low Spring Wood by Helena Dolby  
Spotted flycatcher by Richard Steel/2020VISION  
Roe Deer by Don Sutherland





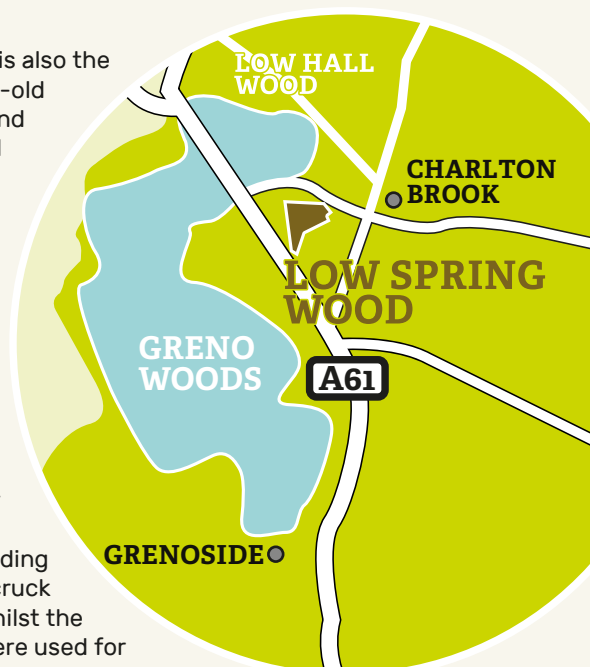
Some months on, we're now delighted to announce that we have agreed the purchase of Low Spring Wood, made possible thanks to generous funding from The Banister Charitable Trust, Charles Haywood Foundation and Garfield Weston Foundation, as well as an extraordinarily generous donation, which deserves a special thank you, from one individual member of £15,000 towards some of the initial woodland management works needed to bring Low Spring Wood back to health after a period of minimal maintenance.

Low Spring Wood - it is a very special place that needs careful long term management. The area of high biodiversity woodland which includes Greno Woods and Low Spring Wood is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including over 60 species of birds, some of them 'red-listed' species of conservation concern such as the common cuckoo, spotted flycatcher and tree pipit, all of which have suffered serious declines over the past 30 years. Other 'at risk' wildlife found in Low Spring Wood itself includes the white-letter hairstreak butterfly, dusky brocade moth and hedgehog. Roe deer also make the wood their home, and there's a rich ground flora of ancient woodland indicator species such as woodruff, wood anemone and bluebell.

**"Purchasing land to put in trust is one of the very few ways to preserve 800-year-old woodlands ... these woods will be a rarity in the UK in another 800 years. We must encourage more organisations to do this and bring in local people to look after their local heritage."**

Anonymous donor

Low Spring Wood is also the site of a centuries-old system of woodland management, and traces of this cottage industry remain today. 'The Spring' means that it was coppiced, with some trees also left to grow as standards (single trunks), to be harvested for timber. Timber trees would have been used for building projects such as cruck barns or boats, whilst the coppiced poles were used for making charcoal and pit props.



These days, there's still plenty of work to be done. Thinning the woodland's canopy will allow in more light to the woodland floor, encouraging both the ground flora and tree regeneration. Holly, which used to be cut annually to provide winter feed for animals, will need to be controlled in some areas where its thick growth blocks out light, stifling the growth of important woodland plant life below and the creatures which depend on it. Thankfully, with your ongoing support, we'll now be able to restore this beautiful corner of Sheffield for generations to come.

Find out more about Low Spring Wood at [wildsheffield.com/nature-reserves/local-reserves-information/greno-woods](http://wildsheffield.com/nature-reserves/local-reserves-information/greno-woods)

## Let's grow our nest eggs together

If you're wrapping up your accounts ahead of the financial year end, why not speak to your accountant about tax-efficient giving? We're always grateful for those of you who pop a few pounds in the charity box now and then - but did you know that you can boost the value of your donation and make the donation work for you if you do it via a scheme like Gift Aid or payroll giving?



Help us do more

Find out about tax-efficient giving



# Bring the wildlife you love right to your doorstep this spring

Whether you've got a postage stamp or a football pitch, there's lots you can be doing to prepare your garden for its visitors this spring.

We provide a whole range of locally sourced, sustainably produced wildlife products including bat boxes, insect homes, bird boxes and hedgehog homes to help you get ready.

Until 1st April 2018, *Kingfisher* readers get 10 per cent off all our products: just quote **10WPAPRIL18**

And don't forget, all profits go towards caring for your local wildlife, too.

wild  
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