

The member magazine for Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust

Kingfisher

Spring 2020

Issue 102

WORKING WITH WATER

Slowing the flow in
Sheffield's Lakeland

NATURAL SOLUTIONS

How restoring natural
habitats can help tackle
the climate crisis

SPRING SPECTACLE

Nature's sopranos

Enjoy performances from the
finest avian songsters this spring



Welcome



I hope you are looking forward to spring and the chance to get out and enjoy nature. The beautiful blackbird on the cover of this edition of *Kingfisher* is a great reminder of spring and the wonderful bird song you can hear at this time of year.

We've seen the damage flooding can cause to our region - the recent storms hit Sheffield & Rotherham and other parts of South Yorkshire hard. But our nature reserves are doing a fantastic job storing large amounts of flood water in at-risk areas. We are extending this approach through our Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership; see p16 to see how upstream land management can slow the flow of water coming off the moors.

We had some fantastic news over the winter. After seven long years of campaigning, it's wonderful to be able to share some good news with you about Smithy Wood (p12). Thanks to all of you for taking action with us, protesting, writing letters and submitting objections. However, the fight is not over yet; we want to secure this wood for future generations to enjoy. Sign up to our newsletter at wildsheffield.com/social to get regular updates.

Looking ahead, in order to secure nature's recovery and respond to the ecological emergency we are facing, one of the things we must ensure over the coming year is that we have really strong laws to help us protect what we love. As we go to press the new Environment Bill is still not tough enough - we need a powerful Environmental watchdog to hold agencies, corporates and the Government to account. You can still help by contacting your MP and asking them to strengthen the Bill, so we don't have to spend seven years fighting for a piece of ancient woodland to be saved in future. Visit wildsheffield.com/wilderfuture to find out how.

Thank you as always for your continued support - especially to everyone who joined us clearing up the plastic and litter deposited by floodwaters. It was not a pleasant task but so important to clear up the rubbish that was left behind.

Liz Ballard
Chief Executive

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WOOD WARBLER: ANDY ROUSE/2020VISION

Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust *Get in touch*

Kingfisher is the member magazine for Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust. Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust is registered as a charity no. 700638 and company no. 2287928. *Kingfisher* is edited by Claire Hanley-Öpik, designed by Ink & Water and printed by Northend Creative Print Solutions on FSC® mixed credit paper. The Consultant Editor is Sophie Stafford and the Consultant Designer is Tina Smith Hobson.

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Cover: Konrad Wothe/naturepl.com





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BUTTERFLY: VICKY NALL

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Thank you to our volunteers!

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3 ways to get involved with your local Wildlife Trust

Speak up

Your voice matters – use it to help us make even more impact on local and national issues wildsheffield.com/campaigning

Turn out

Out on the reserves or in the office, we'd love your help looking after wildlife! Donate your skills and time at wildsheffield.com/volunteer

Share the love

Follow us on your favourite social media platform and share our stories and appeals with friends and family wildsheffield.com/social

Thanks to our Corporate supporters Join forces with them wildsheffield.com/corporate





Thank you

Thanks to you we've been able to restore and improve habitats for rare woodland birds at Blacka Moor. Let us know what you see there at wildsheffield.com/sightings



Your wild spring

Where to see wildlife and enjoy nature on your doorstep

WONDERFUL WILDLIFE

Sing it loud!

No matter how much you love your duvet, getting out of bed at stupid o'clock is totally worth it to hear the symphonic majesty of the dawn chorus. There's something about noticing birdsong which seems to reconnect and awaken a sense of belonging in the world.

From March to May birds are giving full voice to their greatest hits, in a heroic melodic effort to attract mates and defend their territories.

It starts with the sweet songs of skylarks, blackbirds and robins punctuating the last moments of night, soon joined by the clear bold voice of the song thrush. As the

darkness begins to fade to half-light the wood pigeons wake up, their soft cooing adding a subtle bass line to the song. As light begins to steal over the horizon, competition for airtime builds in earnest; the chiff-chaff calling its name for all to hear, a sharp top note cutting through. By the time the sun rises the wrens and warblers are joining in, building into a joyous, life-affirming, harmonious whole that is always familiar but never the same.

You can enjoy the dawn chorus wherever you are simply by opening a window, but to get the full surround sound experience get yourself to a woodland; we think Wyming Brook (see page 10) is a perfect spot to enjoy the ultimate sound of spring.

PHOTOS: ANDY ROUSE/2020VISION



The tiny wood warbler has a beautiful fluid song. On the Red List, it is a species of the highest conservation priority.



Thanks to funding from Outokumpu we've been able to protect the bluebells at Moss Valley Woodlands. Visit from mid-April to see the wonderful display and make some magical memories of your own.

HABITAT

Enjoy a spring spectacular

There's something about stepping into the heady scent of bluebell woods that evokes fairy tales. Maybe it's because our bluebells are indicators of ancient woodland, and that is where you're most likely to find them; or perhaps it's an echo of the Flower Fairies with their bluebell bonnets. Bluebells are an important source of nectar for early pollinators, and can take years to recover if they are trampled, so tread carefully; and don't pick them lest you be led astray by the fair folk!

BLUEBELLS: KATRINA MARTIN/2020 VISION



URBAN FOX: JAMIE HALL

Urban fox in a churchyard

URBAN FIELDCRAFT

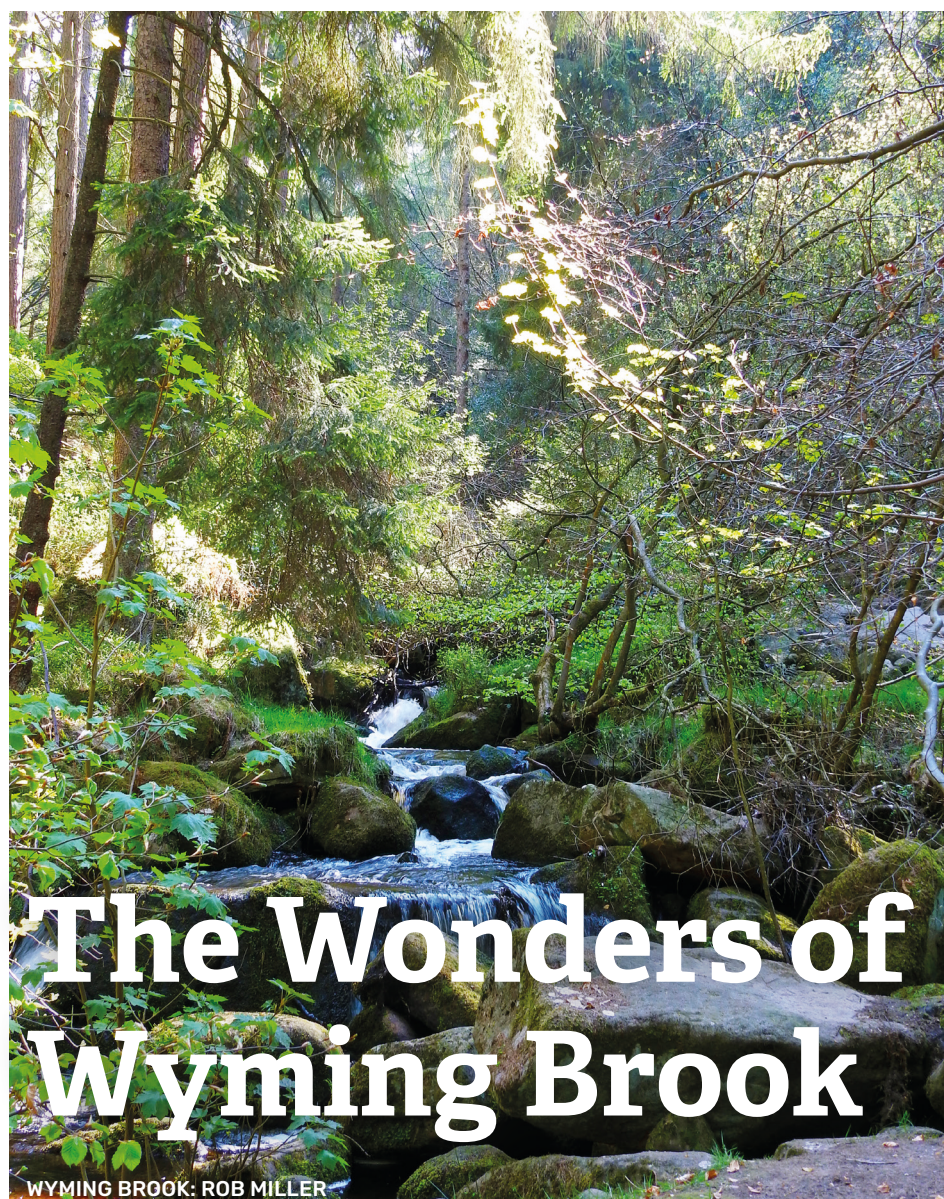
Vulpine visions

One of our most distinctive mammals, foxes have adapted well to living in cities and towns. This means you have a great chance of spotting them without having to venture too far from home. They will often dig out dens under garden sheds, tree roots or along railway embankments as a safe space to raise their cubs, and a place to shelter, usually leaving the den in the early hours to forage for food. You might even spot fox cubs in your garden once they emerge from their den in spring. Many people enjoy feeding foxes, just don't do it too often or offer too much food.

HOW TO SPOT AN URBAN FOX

- **Stroll through a cemetery** – Graveyards can be a refuge for urban wildlife, providing a safe and quiet retreat to rest during daylight hours.
- **Park yourself** – Foxes will sometimes come out of hiding even in daylight hours to scavenge through litter bins, but the best time is dusk, as the park becomes quieter and less busy. Sitting still could reward you with an inquisitive fox sniffing out an early supper.
- **Go industrial** – Business parks and industrial estates are often littered with fast food packaging and leftovers from hurried lunch breaks. During the wee small hours this bounty can provide foraging foxes with an all-you-can-eat buffet!






This wild place is the perfect spot to listen to the dawn chorus.

Once set aside for the exclusive use of the nobility, Wyming Brook's babbling streams, mossy crags and sweet smelling pines are protected today as a valuable home to wildlife. Now we can all enjoy this little bit of wilderness on the western edge of Sheffield, with easy strolls by the streams or higher, rockier routes with dramatic views of the Rivelin reservoirs and the city beyond.

Part of the Eastern Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest, there is an abundance of wildlife at this nature reserve, including the shy roe deer. It is also a favourite spot for birdwatchers, thanks to the impressive array of species

which make their home here, from crossbills to dippers and notable summer migrant bird species such as redstarts, wood warblers and pied flycatchers.

Wyming Brook has received a prestigious Green Flag Award, an international award scheme which recognises this nature reserve as one of the very best green spaces in the UK.

 Spend some quality time in Wyming Brook helping us to look after it. We have volunteer days there every month, and we'd love to have your company for an hour - or even all day. See wildsheffield.com/whats-on for the next one and stick it in your calendar!



NOW YOU DO IT

Visit Wyming Brook

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Location: Wyming Brook is on the western edge of Sheffield.

How to get there: Bus number 51 stops at Lodge Moor bus terminus on Redmires Road, a 10 minute walk from the nature reserve. Buses 273, 274 and 275 all stop on Manchester Road to the north of the reserve. Find more details on the Travel South Yorkshire website. The car park is on Redmires Road close to Soughley Lane.

Access: Wyming Brook Drive forms a wide, surfaced bridleway running through the reserve on a north-south line, with a division off to the east. The remaining Public Rights of Way are unsurfaced footpaths through the woodlands, with numerous small bridges crossing the brook. Please contact the Trust for disabled access information.

Other information: Dogs are permitted on the reserve but must be kept on a lead at all times. Cycles are permitted on the bridleways on this reserve.

Phone: 0114 263 4335

Email: mail@wildsheffield.com

Website: wildsheffield.com

TOP WILDLIFE TO SPOT

Wood Warbler: see if you can spot one singing in the tree canopy. Green above, it has a distinctive, bright yellow chest and eyestripe.

Roe deer: Our most common native deer, the roe deer tends to be solitary in summer, but forms small, loose groups in winter. The males have relatively short antlers, typically with three points; shedding the velvet from them in spring. By summer, they are ready for the rutting season. The best time to spot them is early in the morning.

Fungi: the reserve is host to a spectacular array of fungi in the autumn months, including the unusually named 'plums and custard', and the 'amethyst deceiver'.

TRY THIS

➤ Wyming Brook is a wonderful place to listen to the dawn chorus. Get there before the sun rises to enjoy the full experience.

➤ Climb the path along the crags for a spectacular view of the Rivelin Dams.



NOT JUST FOR KIDS

Six ways to put a spring in your step

1 HIGH WATER, COMMON GROUND

6th April

Join us for an evening exploring the fast-developing field of Natural Flood Management and how it can help protect us in an increasingly unpredictable world.

We premiere a short film looking at water in the Sheffield Lakeland area, investigating how sustainable management of the rural landscape around Sheffield can help protect the city from flooding, followed by a documentary exploring innovative flood risk management measures being taken by flood-affected communities around the country. After the film there will be Q&A session with a panel of local experts.

2 JUMP INTO SPRING

Check ponds for frogspawn and tadpoles in the early spring; if the spawn is in strands rather than clumps, its toadspawn. The tadpoles will start to emerge after around three weeks, with toadlets appearing from 6 - 8 weeks and froglets maturing over 12 weeks. Let us know what you see and when at wildsheffield.com/sightings



3 LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Getting outside with an expert can add a wonderful new dimension to your walks. Make the most of spring with a Woodland and Wildflower guided walk through the beautiful Moss Valley Woodlands, or learn a bit of ancient wisdom with local herb expert James Adams. The Herbal Walk and Workshop will teach you to identify

historical herbs and how to make your own herbal preparation. If you're intrigued by our local avian fauna, then join local bird expert Chris, your guide on the Blacka Moor bird walk looking and listening for the resident birds and summer visitors who inhabit the diverse habitats on the nature reserve. See wildsheffield.com/whats-on for more details



If you'd like help us carry out activities such as bird surveys and habitat condition assessments on a regular basis for our new More Data for Nature project (see page 15) we'll provide the in-depth training to help you develop the ecological and surveying skills necessary. Get in touch wildsheffield.com/volunteering



SEE THIS

The orange-tip butterfly only flies for a few months each year. Look for it in grassland and woodland edges from April.

LISTEN FOR

Chiffchaffs singing their name from the tops of trees. They are one of the first migrant birds to arrive in March.

4 FUN FOR FAMILIES

We've got plenty of wildlife activities for the whole family in every holiday, from woodland Wild Play sessions to our free Woodhouse Washlands family events. See wildsheffield.com/whats-on for details.



5 POINT TO POINT

If you're looking for something that involves brain as well as body, then orienteering might be just up your street - or

wood, or moorland! The aim is to navigate between control points marked on an orienteering map, and it can be as challenging or uncomplicated as you like. No matter your age or ability, you can go at your own pace on any terrain you like; from wild places to urban areas, parks and playgrounds. If you've got a competitive streak, there are plenty of contests around, including TrailO, where people of all levels of physical ability, including wheelchair users, can compete on equal terms. See britishorienteering.org.uk for more information.



Give orienteering a go at Greno Woods!
Download maps and control sheets at wildsheffield.com/greno-woods

6 SIGNS OF SPRING

The study of the timing of natural events is called phenology, and it involves making a note of when you first see changes happening; things like butterflies emerging, hawthorn blossom, birds nesting or seasonal visitors arriving and leaving. Scientists can then use these timings to analyse wider changes in the environment. You could mark your sightings in a diary with photographs or sketches. In addition, taking time to notice nature can have benefits for you (see page 11)! Record your sightings at wildsheffield.com/sightings

LOOK FOR

The first bumblebees on warm days in March; they are likely to be queens looking out for nectar and pollen from spring flowers.

FORAGE FOR

Wild garlic in woodlands. The smell alone should help you find the edible leaves and flowers! Great in pesto or in soup.



MY WILD LIFE



Ruby tells us why working in the wild has her fizzing with enthusiasm!



I help deliver the sessions created by the Outdoor Learning team, like wild play, Life in the Stone Age, natural art, pirates and Life on the Farm sessions; all sorts of exciting, dramatic and creative things that encourage children and young people to engage with the world around them in a way they never have.

I got involved after a module on Forest Schools taught by Chris Smith (Senior Outdoor Learning Officer). Every year on my degree and PGCE we ended up doing something outdoorsy with the trust. When the Casual Outdoor Learning Assistant (COLA for short) role came up in 2018 I went for it. I love using my teaching skills in the beautiful outdoors, and helping people gain a better understanding of the world around them.

No two sessions are ever the same. We could have dogs, birds, there might be no bugs on the bug hunt, and sometimes the fire just will NOT light! Thankfully my fire skills have improved! I'm really proud of being part of an amazing team that works so hard to help people learn about nature and have fun doing it.

If I had to pass on some advice it would be: Always bring more snacks and drinks than you think you'll need, and always bring sun cream - even in the rain, in winter! Finally, always take the time to just stop and look at the view. It's beautiful.



Ruby :-)



Discover more about the inspiring variety of sessions delivered by our amazing team at wildsheffield.com/outdoor-learning. Our Outdoor Learning is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Supported by players of



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Bats

Discover more about these magnificent flying mammals

Bats are an essential part of our ecological networks, and surprisingly make up almost a third of the UK's mammal species. Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight, and their nocturnal acrobatics are a joy to see on a warm evening. There are 18 UK bat species, eight of which are found in South Yorkshire, ranging in size from the noctule – around the size of a mouse – to the pipistrelle species which weigh less than a 2p coin. Bats live and hunt in a wide variety of habitats, from woodland to wetland and urban locations. They don't make nests, as they need different roosting conditions throughout the year and move around to find the one that best suits their needs; the most commonly used are trees, buildings, caves and bat boxes. All our native bat species eat insects; they use echolocation to find their prey which involves calling at high frequencies and hearing the returning echoes. They are not blind!

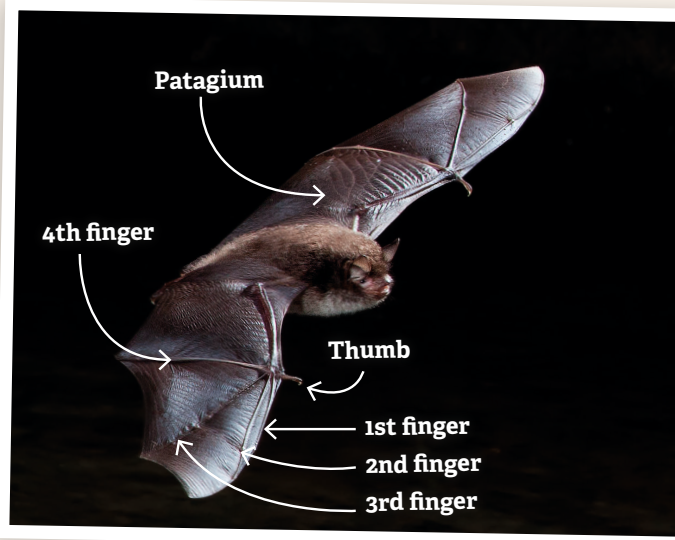
Ecosystem indicators

Worldwide over 500 plant species rely on bats for pollination, and in the UK bats play an important role in pest control; a single tiny pipistrelle bat can eat 3,000 insects in just one night! All our native bat species eat insects; they use echolocation to find their prey which involves calling at high frequencies and hearing the returning echoes. This makes bats a great indicator species; a guide to the state of nature's health.

UK bat populations are under pressure from development, agricultural intensification, land use changes, light pollution and habitat fragmentation. Their decline in number has led to their legal protection.

See them this season

Bats start to become active throughout the spring and summer as the weather warms up. Look for them at dusk when it has been dry and warm. The common pipistrelle is the species you are most likely to see circling or



flitting round your garden, and you can often see Daubenton's bats skimming along the surface of rivers, canals, ponds and lakes, as they can use their feet or tails to scoop insects off the surface of the water. Look out for bats at our nature reserves including Wyming Brook, Moss Valley and Salmon Pastures.



You can help bats by making your garden wildlife friendly so there are plenty of insects for them. Nocturnal insects prefer pale flowers or those with an evening scent. Download a free guide to bat-friendly gardening bit.ly/BatFriendly

You can even build your own bat box wildsheffield.com/how-to-build-a-bat-box



Bat facts



➤ DNA testing revealed we have more species of bat in the UK than previously thought! The Alcaholic bat was only confirmed as a resident species in 2010 due to its similarity to the whiskered and Brandt's bat species.

➤ Bats mate in the autumn and winter but females only become pregnant in the spring due to delayed fertilization of the egg.

➤ As well as echolocating to navigate and find food, many bats produce 'social calls' which are being studied by scientists with the aid of electronic bat detectors.



**Jenny King**

Have you felt the touch and pull of nature – stirring a real sense of humanity or our ancestral past – or just a good vibe from being outside? It is different for everyone.

Paying attention to, looking forward to and sharing what we notice, are the keystones of building a deep personal connection to nature and finding ways to connect with others. Nature connection can be defined as the extent to which someone includes nature as part of their identity; feeling emotionally connected to nature. Recent research reveals exposure to green spaces and feeling connected to nature provides many benefits to people, including increased wellbeing.

Connecting with nature in a way that is meaningful takes us out of our pressing troubles and concerns for a while, allowing our brains to switch to a different focus. This is restorative and often leaves us feeling more positive and able to cope with life's challenges.

The Wild at Heart project uses a hobby based approach to give people opportunities to try new things and gain confidence by taking a closer look at nature. It's our way to connect people, helping to reduce social isolation and feelings of loneliness. Boiled down, Wild at Heart brings people together by delighting in the natural world.

Our programme is full of seasonal nature based activities which are meaningful to our participants – the programme ideas often come from participants sharing their own interests, skills and lived experiences. Over the last six years we have been exploring local parks and green spaces, and building on nature-connected hobbies like gardening, photography, crafts and cooking, taking inspiration from the natural world. By being a part of a group joining in with these simple nature-based activities, our participants make connections to



other people; the lesson here is when we share the moment with others, friendships begin to flourish.

"No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they haven't experienced"

David Attenborough

In addition to the academic research linking nature connection to wellbeing, evidence suggests people who feel more connected are more likely to demonstrate positive environmental behaviours and take care of nature. So there is a wider impact to embracing nature connection; not only does it have social and health benefits for participants, it can help to create space for even more people to experience a good life with choice and meaning. A virtuous circle – good for the individual, good for nature and our broader society!

If you want to find out more about this developing field try following Miles Richardson's blog findingnature.org.uk.



Wild at Heart offers weekly community based nature activity sessions for adults. It is funded through the National Lottery Community Fund, Rotherham Social Prescribing Service and a collection of other charitable organisations. To find out more visit wildsheffield.com/wild-at-heart

A LITTLE BIT WILD

Find your connection

Take time to actively notice three good things in nature every day, to increase connectedness and improve your sense of wellbeing. Join in on social media [#3GoodThings](https://twitter.com/3GoodThings)



Jenny King

is the Wild at Heart Project Officer for Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust.



PHOTOS: DAVID DICKINSON, NIAL BENVIE/2020VISION

LOCAL

Huge win for our Save Smithy Wood Campaign

After years of campaigning by Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, MSA Extra have withdrawn their application to develop a major motorway service area on Smithy Wood, a semi-natural ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Site near J35 of the M1.

Working in partnership with other organisations opposing the scheme – including the Woodland Trust and Cowley Residents' Action Group – the Trust has been engaged in the ongoing campaign to save Smithy Wood since 2013. The planned service station would have resulted in a huge loss of biodiversity and access to green space for local people, and the proposals for mitigation were clearly insufficient to compensate for the damage caused to an irreplaceable habitat.

In addition to commenting on the application, the Trust continued to

update and engage the public, local woodland experts and the local MP through the media and public events, with a public rally outside Sheffield Town Hall in 2017 attracting with over 300 attendees.

The planning application for Smithy Wood was put on hold while another application for an alternative motorway service station at Junction 33 of the M1 was being considered by Rotherham Council's planning committee. Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust argued against the need for an MSA at either site, but once the Junction 33 application was approved, there was clearly no need for any more service stations along this part of the M1.

Liz Ballard, Chief Executive of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust said "this is really fantastic news; working with local

residents at Cowley, we have been fighting to save this woodland for seven years. We had an incredible amount of support from hundreds of people across Sheffield answering our call to join our peaceful protest, write letters and submit objections. So this is down to everyone who took action to help Save Smithy Wood – thank you! But this is not the end. For this wood to be saved for local people and wildlife we now ask St Pauls as land owners to work with us so that we can secure this woodland for future generations to enjoy.'



 You can support our campaigning work further by donating to our campaigning fund wildsheffield.com/support-us/support-an-appeal



LOCAL

Making history

The archaeological survey of Wadsley and Loxley Common has started. Funded by Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership, the project saw several volunteers from the Wadsley and Loxley Commoners group join our professional archaeologist to undertake a survey of the archaeological and historical features of the common. Despite the heavy rain we spent two days in November on site visiting a few locations to look in detail at the remains. When a feature is identified on the ground the volunteers record the dimensions and as much information as they can about the remains. Although the group have a

huge amount of local knowledge of the area, the survey identified at least two features that were previously unknown to them! More work is planned over January and February when the group will be back on the common to do more; hopefully with better weather! The results will be compiled into a report at the end of the survey.

 Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership can support local groups to develop their own projects. Find out more wildsheffield.com/community-grant-scheme

LOCAL

Wetland Wombles

During the recent floods three of our nature reserves - Woodhouse Washlands, Centenary Riverside and Kilnhurst Ings - stored millions of cubic metres of water, which would have otherwise flooded homes and businesses. The deluge left a large amount of debris and rubbish on the reserves as the floods receded. A big

'thank you' to everyone who came along to assist with the clean-up, you've been fantastic!

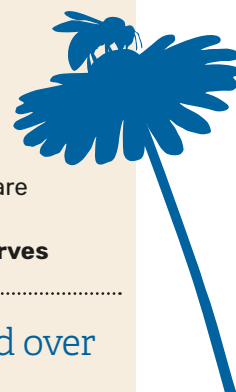
 To help Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust increase the number of places providing natural flood management locally, donate now at wildsheffield.com/donate

Together we're stronger

Here are some of the ways your membership has been helping to protect your local wildlife:

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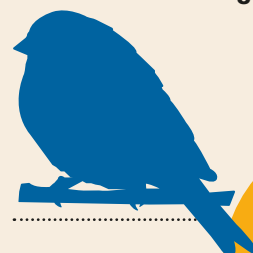
new homes created for rare birds on Blacka Moor
wildsheffield.com/reserves



You've empowered over

1,000

people in Rotherham to reclaim and change local green spaces
wildsheffield.com/natural-neighbours



Thank you!


You helped us respond to

33

planning applications responded to resulting in positive outcomes for wildlife
wildsheffield.com/planning-issues

19

4 new ponds have been created and colonised by great crested newts at Woodhouse Washlands wildsheffield.com/a-network-for-nature



A bottlenose dolphin leaps clear of the water in the Moray Firth

UK UPDATE

A big splash for UK seas - our 2019 marine review

Together, the Wildlife Trusts form the UK's largest marine conservation organisation. Our Living Seas teams are the eyes and ears of the UK's coast. Throughout 2019, with the help of over 5,000 volunteers, they did wonderful things for the wildlife in our seas.

Careful monitoring revealed some fantastic good news stories around our shores, from bumper breeding seasons to amazing discoveries.

A new citizen science project logged 320 sightings of cetaceans off Yorkshire's east coast, including minke whales, bottlenose dolphins and harbor porpoises. There was good news for seals too, with Cumbria Wildlife Trust counting a site record of 483 grey seals at South Walney, including seven pups. Elsewhere, an individual seal, nicknamed Tulip Belle, was discovered commuting between the Isle of Man and Cornwall.

Lara Howe, Manx Wildlife Trust's marine officer, says: "It shows that seals will swim great distances for food and a place to pup, highlighting the importance of a network of Marine Protected Areas around the UK, so that wherever marine wildlife goes there are healthy seas to support them."

Our fight to secure this network saw a huge victory last summer, with the designation of 41 new Marine Conservation Zones.

2019 also saw a welcome boost for some of our struggling seabirds. On Handa Island, Scottish Wildlife Trust counted 8,207 razorbills, the highest number since 2006, though the population is sadly still in trouble. In North Wales, Sandwich terns had a bumper year, with 800 chicks fledging compared to just 180 in 2018.

Sadly, it wasn't all good news. Several Wildlife Trusts reported an increase in disturbance. Jet skis, kayakers, boats and drones have all been recorded causing distress to marine wildlife like dolphins, seals and seabirds.

Plastics, ocean litter and discarded fishing gear also continue to devastate marine wildlife, though Wildlife Trusts around our shores cleared up huge amounts of litter, including 2.5 tonnes picked up by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust.

All of this was made possible by the fantastic support of all our volunteers and members. For more amazing stories head to wildlifetrusts.org/marine-review-19

2019 IN NUMBERS

- Over **5,000 volunteers** supported coastal Wildlife Trusts with beach cleans, surveys and shore-based events.
- More than **200 sharks, skates and rays** were tagged as part of Ulster Wildlife's SeaDeep project, helping us monitor these vulnerable animals.
- Two giant gobies were among **1,310 species recorded in just 24 hours** as Devon Wildlife Trust's Wembury Marine Centre celebrated its 25th anniversary.
- **27 tonnes** of litter and fishing gear collected by fisherman for Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Fishing 4 Litter.



Get involved

We need to put nature into recovery on land and at sea. Join us on our campaign for a wilder future: wildlifetrusts.org/wilder-future



LOCAL

Project supersized

Following on from the successful 'Data for Nature' project, a new project will work to expand our monitoring scheme to measure biodiversity at a landscape scale. Thanks to a £127,800 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and a further £15,000 from the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, the 'More Data for Nature' project will work with local groups to monitor their wildlife sites, and collaborate with other Wildlife Trusts from around the country to develop a framework for assessing biodiversity across a landscape scale.

We're working to identify potential local sites for inclusion in the project and would be interested in hearing from organisations such as 'friends of' groups

or local land owners who are keen to develop monitoring for their area, as well as enthusiastic local people to carry out activities such as bird surveys and habitat condition assessments. To get in touch about the project, please contact Pete Tomlin on p.tomlin@wildsheffield.com



New leader for The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts are delighted to welcome Craig Bennett as their new Chief Executive Officer.

One of the UK's leading environmental campaigners, Craig joins The Wildlife Trusts from Friends of the Earth, where he was Chief Executive.

In a conservation career spanning over 20 years, Craig has led a movement to end peat cutting on important moorlands, helped secured better wildlife legislation through The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and, more recently, led successful campaigns to highlight climate



change and to protect and restore bee populations.

Craig Bennett says: "The Wildlife Trusts are an extraordinary grassroots movement that is uniquely placed to work with local communities to make this happen and ensure a wilder future, and I could not be more pleased to have been asked to lead them at this incredibly important moment." wildlifetrusts.org/new-leader

An insect apocalypse

A new report, *Insect Declines and Why They Matter*, commissioned by an alliance of Wildlife Trusts in the south west, concluded that drastic declines in insect numbers look set to have far-reaching consequences for both wildlife and people. The report concludes: "if insect declines are not halted, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems will collapse, with profound consequences for human wellbeing." wildlifetrusts.org/urgent-action-insects



UK HIGHLIGHTS

Discover how The Wildlife Trusts are helping wildlife across the UK



1 HS2 Confirmed

With Phase 2b now confirmed to go ahead as part of an integrated plan for rail in the north, the Wildlife Trusts are calling for complete redesign of the scheme to truly deliver for the natural environment – through exemplary route design, mitigation and compensation – before HS2 creates a scar that can never heal. wildsheffield.com/news

2 Attenborough appeal

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust launched an appeal to raise £1 million to safeguard Attenborough Nature Reserve, a wild oasis at the edge of Nottingham that's home to large numbers of wildfowl. The appeal was supported by Sir David Attenborough and raised over £900,000 in the first month. nottinghamshirewildlife.org/

3 Spooky sighting

A ghost slug was discovered in the gardens of Devon Wildlife Trust's Cricklepit Mill. The origins of this mysterious species are uncertain, but it's thought to be a native of Ukraine. Since ghost slugs were first discovered in the UK in 2007, there have been a scattering of sightings, mainly from South Wales. It's a predator of earthworms and may cause problems for our native worms if it becomes established. devonwildlifetrust.org/news/ghost





Slowing the Flow in the Sheffield Lakeland

It's 18 months since the Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership (SLLP) started delivering work on the ground, and in this issue of *Kingfisher* we're going to look at some of the conservation being undertaken to protect landscapes and wildlife by the "Working With Water" project. →



Curlews used to be a common sight on upland farms, but excessive land drainage reduces availability of the damp habitat they need to thrive.

CURLEW: ANDY MORFEFF



FEATURE SLOWING THE FLOW

Disappearing Wetlands

Over the last 100 years 90% of our wetlands have disappeared in the UK, and so it's hardly surprising to read that over 10% of our freshwater and wetland species are now threatened with extinction. Reasons for this dramatic loss include unsustainable farming and development practices, urbanisation and abstraction. Species are affected by pollution from rural and urban areas, the modification of rivers and wetlands (like adding concrete sides to streams) and the impacts of invasive non-native species.

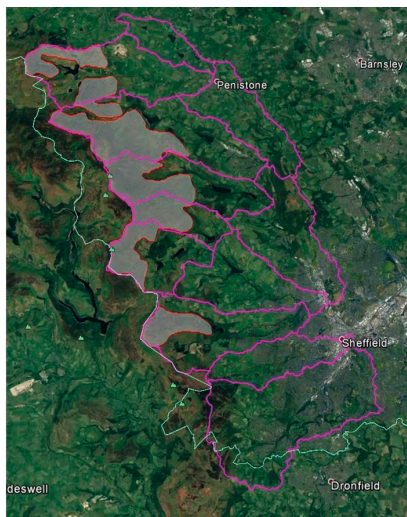
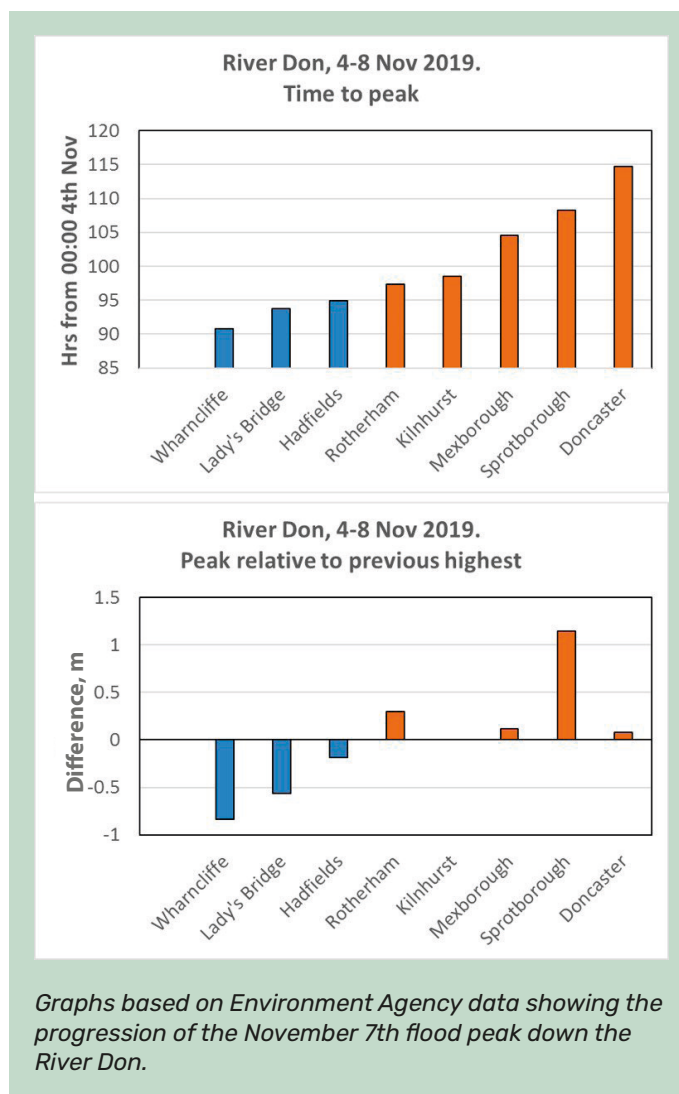
In the Sheffield Lakeland area, our water-rich habitats support populations of nationally declining species such as water vole, lapwing and curlew, and locally uncommon plants such as bog asphodel and round-leaved sundew. Good quality, healthy wetland habitat is critical for thousands of other species across the landscape including otters, kingfishers, salmon, dippers, bats and amphibians.

Natural Flood Management

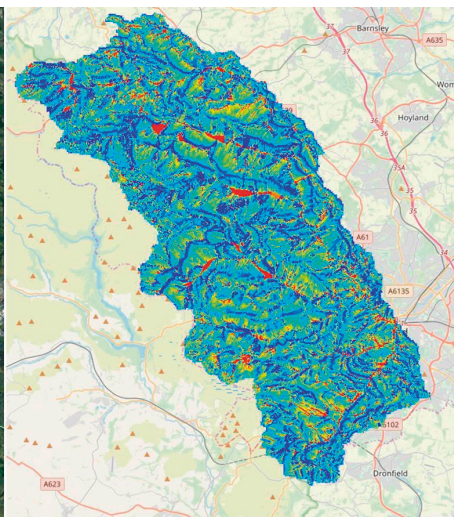
Aside from benefits for wildlife, healthy wetlands and rivers can also provide communities with protection from flooding by holding water in the landscape and slowing the flow of water through river systems. The approach is known as natural flood management (NFM).

November 2019 saw catastrophic flooding in South Yorkshire, resulting from the wettest autumn ever recorded in Sheffield. Over 1000 homes were damaged by flooding in South Yorkshire alone. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency of extreme weather in the future, costing governments and taxpayers millions and devastating communities and businesses.

Millions of pounds were invested in hard flood defences in our South Yorkshire towns and cities after the major flooding of



Upper Don sub-catchments showing approximate area of burn-managed moorland

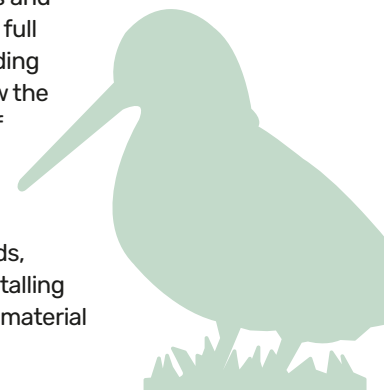


Upper Don catchment hydrological connectivity (measure of connectedness to streams) modelled using SCIMAP (my.scimap.org.uk)

The hydrological connectivity of the Sheffield Lakelands region, highlighting the importance of the land (around 75%) which is moorland not managed for grouse shooting. Solving floods downstream requires an integrated approach among all stakeholders, not just the moorlands.

2007, which reduced the damage from last autumn's extreme weather. However there is a growing understanding nationally that we need to take a holistic approach to managing river catchments. In addition to raising flood defences, we also need to hold water back as long as possible in the upper catchments, storing and dispersing rainwater at every stage of its long journey across the landscape.

Species such as curlews - now on the Red List - need wet boggy areas and damp, rough grassland full of invertebrates as feeding areas. NFM aims to slow the flow through a range of activities including planting trees and hedges, creating ponds and new wetlands, blocking gullies and installing leaky dams and woody material





FEATURE SLOWING THE FLOW



Sick Brook walling volunteers.

in watercourses. Farmland comprises 75% of land use in the UK, so working with farmers to make space for water and wildlife is a particularly important way to address flood risk in urban areas, and ensure any pollutants or silt resulting from agricultural activity are intercepted before they enter watercourses.

Working With Water

Much of the Sheffield Lakeland landscape is managed traditionally, sustaining good wetland habitats and providing conditions for holding back water on the land. Working with Sheffield City Council and Yorkshire Water, with support from the Environment Agency, the Wildlife Trust has identified 14 small sites in the Upper Don catchment where we can work with tenant farmers to help them retain what's already good in terms of water management, and to install new NFM measures where they are appropriate.

In the first 18 months of the project we have already undertaken work on six sites, protecting existing wetland habitats, fencing off watercourses to prevent erosion by livestock, installing new gates and culverts to address soil erosion problems, and removing invasive rhododendrons which were smothering native wetland vegetation.

Another element of the project is demonstrating the impact of these small scale interventions on the catchment, to show decision-makers NFM has a valid role to play in addressing flood risk. As part of the project we are working with Sheffield Hallam University, who are undertaking hydrology monitoring to research the impact of our work.



Top to bottom: Cowell before works (Nov 2017), during works (Sept 2019) and after (Sept 2019).

Discover more about the rapidly-developing field of NFM and how it can help protect us in an increasingly uncertain world, at our screening of 'High Water, Common Ground'. Details on page 8.

Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust is the lead partner in the Sheffield Lakeland landscape partnership co-ordinating the work of more than 20 partner organisations towards a common vision. The Partnership has been made possible by a grant of £2.6m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with matched funding from our core partners to deliver a £3.4m package of partnership projects conserving and celebrating the natural, built and cultural heritage of north-west Sheffield.



**Sheffield &
Rotherham**



**STOCKSBRIDGE
TOWN COUNCIL**



Natural Carbon SOLUTIONS

BY JOANNA RICHARDS

We face a climate emergency. Extreme weather events are on the increase and the impacts of a warming climate are becoming evident on our beloved wildlife, with some UK species being pushed to the furthest limits of their natural ranges. To tackle a crisis of this scale, it is imperative every tool in the box is used, and this includes the natural solutions offered by our planet. Over half of all carbon emissions released into the atmosphere by humans are re-absorbed by the Earth's natural systems. And yet, many of these systems are broken, the habitats providing them damaged and degraded. Restoring these systems would allow even more carbon to be absorbed – and The Wildlife Trusts are playing a leading role in helping this happen.

At sea, the Trusts fought for the Marine Act 2009: properly implemented it restores our most important carbon absorber and the wildlife that lives within it, including kelp and phytoplankton. On land, 9% of the UK's surface is a huge carbon store with carbon locked up in wet peat. Carbon is also stored in organic rich soils, especially those under grasslands and woodlands. For decades, The Wildlife Trusts have pioneered peatland restoration and sustainably managed woodlands and grassland meadows. This work continues, thanks to our supporters, helping in the fight against climate change.

Saltmarsh

Like peatlands and grasslands, intertidal saltmarsh provides an important carbon store in its soils. Saltmarshes also act as a buffer against coastal erosion – although this and rising sea levels is leading to the loss of this habitat, with only 15% of its historic range remaining.

Woodland

As they grow, trees absorb carbon from the atmosphere, storing it in their trunk, boughs and roots and as organic matter in woodland soils. So, new woodland creation – through natural regeneration for example – helps to combat climate change.

Peatland

Peatlands cover just 3% of the earth's surface, but store more carbon than any other habitat on land (more than twice the carbon of all the world's forests put together). But when damaged, as in the UK, they release carbon, contributing to climate change – so restoration is essential.

Seagrass meadows

These aquatic flowering plants are responsible for around 10% of all carbon buried in the ocean, despite covering less than 0.2% of the ocean floor. They store carbon 35 times faster than rainforests, but estimates suggest that globally we are losing an area of seagrass the size of two football pitches every hour.

NATURAL CARBON SOLUTIONS

Urban

Urban greenspaces help make cities better in a world that's getting hotter. Young street trees take up carbon dioxide and urban woodlands help control the local climate by providing shade and reducing the street temperature. Pleasant greenspaces can also encourage people to walk and cycle rather than jump in a car!

Grassland

Healthy grassland soaks up and stores carbon in its roots and the soil. Grasslands that are undisturbed by arable agriculture and protected from soil erosion through sustainable management are important stores. Yet in the UK, we've lost 97% of our semi-natural grassland and they continue to be at risk.

Seaweed and kelp forests

Kelp grows incredibly quickly, sucking up carbon as it does. These underwater forests provide critical short-term carbon stores. When they die, bits of kelp sink into the deep sea, where they remain for a long time.

Marine sediments

Phytoplankton – minuscule marine algae – absorb carbon as they grow. When they die, some of the carbon they've taken up sinks to the ocean floor, where it can remain for thousands of years.

Gardening for moths and butterflies

By day and by night, gardens large and small can provide a haven for Britain's beleaguered butterflies and moths. **Kate Bradbury** suggests nine ways to support all the stages of their life cycles

Grow nectar-rich flowers

Make sure something is in flower from March through to November, starting with primroses, bluebells and forget-me-not in spring, then alliums, lavender and scabious in late summer, and late-flowering *Verbena bonariensis*, sedums and rudbeckias in autumn.

Plant some climbers

Bare fences and walls are a wasted opportunity to help butterflies. Cover them with plants and provide nectar-rich flowers and shelter for species, such as brimstones, to hibernate. If you grow hops, comma butterflies may lay their eggs on its leaves.

Provide caterpillar foodplants

Butterflies need the right plants to lay eggs in your garden. Grow cuckooflower for caterpillars of the orange-tip butterfly, nettles for peacocks, small tortoiseshells and red admirals, and holly and ivy for the holly blue.

Add a window box

If you don't have a garden or your space is small, grow nectar-rich flowers in pots, window boxes or hanging baskets. Choose low-growing primrose and lavender for pots, and nasturtiums for baskets.

Butterflies and moths have suffered huge declines in recent years. This is largely due to habitat loss, but agricultural pesticides and climate change have made life even more challenging for many species. Happily, there's plenty we can do to help them on our own patch, no matter its size. The UK's gardens take up more space than all of its nature reserves put together, so if we all gardened with butterflies and moths in mind, we could help slow, or even reverse, some of these declines.

We tend to feel more fondly about butterflies than moths, which can be viewed with ambivalence as they fly at night and a few species eat our clothes. But not all moths fly at night – the six-spot burnet and hummingbird hawkmoth can be spotted during the day – and many of them are just as beautiful as their day-flying cousins. Only about five of our 2,500 species eat clothes and moth caterpillars are an important source of food for nesting birds,

hedgehogs and amphibians. So by gardening for moths, we can also help other wildlife.

As adults, most butterflies and moths drink nectar, but their caterpillars eat leaves and other plant material. To make them truly welcome in our gardens, we need to support all stages of their life cycle by growing nectar-rich flowers for the adults and foodplants for the caterpillars. We also need to accommodate the stage in between caterpillar and adult – the chrysalis (butterfly) or cocoon (moth). Many species spend the winter in this vulnerable stage so leave a little patch to grow a bit wild for them. Making space for butterflies and moths to feed, breed and hibernate in our gardens will make all the difference to these struggling pollinators. 🍷



Discover more ways to welcome moths and butterflies into your garden on our website: wildlifetrusts.org/butterflygarden



Kate Bradbury is passionate about wildlife-friendly gardening and the author of *Wildlife Gardening for Everyone* and *Everything in association with The Wildlife Trusts*.

Avoid cutting down plants in autumn

Some butterflies, such as orange-tips, overwinter as chrysalises, which makes them vulnerable to tidying. Leave plants intact over winter and clear them in spring instead. Always check for chrysalises just in case!

Plant a mixed native hedge

If you have space, plant a native tree or two. Many moths lay their eggs on the leaves of willow, dog rose, birch and hawthorn. Grow a climber, such as honeysuckle, through the hedge to make it even more moth-friendly.

Grow night-scented plants

Plant groups of common jasmine, evening primrose, honeysuckle and night-scented stock together, so that moths can find them more easily.

Leave some weeds

Many moths lay their eggs on the leaves of nettles, brambles, dock and dandelions. Even leaving weeds at the back of borders, where you can't see them, will make a difference.

Don't be too tidy

While some moths breed in long grass, many caterpillars and pupae spend winter hibernating in grass or among leaf litter and other plant debris. Leave things where they are in autumn and winter, and tidy up in spring instead.

See how else you can take a range of Actions for Insects at wildsheffield.com/afi

April

Wednesday 1st

Wild Play 🌸

Ecclesall Woods

Life on the Farm 🌸

Our Cow Molly

Thursday 2nd

Volunteer Work Day

Moss Valley Woodlands

Wild Play 🌸

Greno Woods

Saturday 4th

Volunteer Work Day

Blacka Moor

Monday 6th

Volunteer Work Day

Crabtree Ponds

High Water Common Ground:
Film + Q&A 🌸

Tuesday 7th

Volunteer Work Day 🍷

Fox Hagg & Wyming Brook

Wild Play 🌸

Ecclesall Woods

Wednesday 8th

Family Event 🌸

Woodhouse Washlands

Wild Play 🌸

Ecclesall Woods

Thursday 9th

Wild Play 🌸

Greno Woods

Monday 13th

Volunteer Work Day

Centenary Riverside

Thursday 16th

Volunteer Work Day

Blacka Moor

Friday 17th

Volunteer Work Day

Woodhouse Washlands

Saturday 18th

Woodland and Wildflower guided

walk at Moss Valley 🌸

Moss Valley

Wednesday 22nd

Bat Surveys: An Introduction

to Bats, Buildings and Activity

Surveys 🌸

Volunteer Work Day

Sunnybank

Thursday 23rd

Introduction to Phase 1 Habitat

Surveys 🌸

Tuesday 28th

Volunteer Work Day

Carbrook Ravine

May

Monday 4th

Volunteer Work Day

Crabtree Ponds

Tuesday 5th

Volunteer Work Day 🍷

Fox Hagg & Wyming Brook

Tuesday 5th

Volunteer Work Day

Moss Valley Woodlands

Sunday 10th

Blacka Moor Bird Walk 🌸

Monday 11th

Volunteer Work Day

Centenary Riverside

Thursday 14th

Introduction to Phase 1 Habitat

Surveys 🌸

Friday 15th

Volunteer Work Day

Woodhouse Washlands

Saturday 16th

Blacka Moor Bird Walk



Sunday 17th

Herbal Walk and Workshop 🌸

Thursday 21st

Volunteer Work Day

Blacka Moor

Tuesday 26th

Volunteer Work Day

Carbrook Ravine

Wild Play 🌸

Ecclesall Woods

Wednesday 27th

Volunteer Work Day

Sunnybank

Wild Play 🌸

Ecclesall Woods

Thursday 28th

Family Event 🌸

Woodhouse Washlands



Thursday 28th

Wild Play 🌸

Greno Woods

June

Monday 1st

Volunteer Work Day

Crabtree Ponds

Tuesday 2nd

Volunteer Work Day 🍷

Fox Hagg & Wyming Brook

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, Kingfisher Online at wildsheffield.com/social

Event Key:

🍷 Venues or times vary or to be confirmed – check website

🌸 Online booking essential