

WILD LONDON



Protecting London's wildlife for the future
SPRING 2017 | 112 | SPRINGTIME IS BUZZING

News in brief

WILD LONDON SPRING 2017

Welcome to the latest issue of Wild London, bringing you the very best of London's nature and wildlife. In this issue we feature woodpeckers and springtime flowers, and we also enjoy a visit to Devon to meet the wild beavers of the River Otter.

We have exciting news from Camley Street Natural Park, where we are working on the design of a new visitor centre, and we have opportunities to get directly involved in surveying and protecting London's wildlife. Our Dragonfly Detectives team will be recording your sightings of dragonflies and damselflies – beautiful insects that can tell us a lot about the health of London's waterways. And we will once again be recording sightings of London's stunning stag beetles; extinct across much of Britain but still safe in London. Last year we received over 1,000 sightings – let's see if we can spot even more this year!

I am also thrilled to welcome our latest wildlife ambassador, the award-winning author Tom Holland. Tom is especially keen to help protect London's hedgehogs, a campaign which we hope to roll out across London very shortly.

Finally, do watch out for our weekly wildlife column in the pages of the Evening Standard, packed full of facts and published in the @esviews section every Friday!

Gordon Scorer, Chief Executive

London Wildlife Trust is the only charity dedicated solely to protecting the capital's wildlife and wild spaces, engaging London's diverse communities through access to our nature reserves, campaigning, volunteering and education.

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Registered charity number 283895



Despite weighing less than a one pound coin, the tiny wren is 10 times louder, weight for weight, than an enthusiastic farmyard cockerel

Weekly wildlife in the Evening Standard

London Wildlife Trust has teamed up with the Evening Standard to brighten up commuters' journeys with a weekly wildlife column.

Every Friday we focus on a wildlife species that is currently strutting its stuff in the capital. We've looked at tree-top herons, squabbling as they build nests, steal twigs and try to seduce their neighbours' partners. We've bigged up the tiny wren, ten times louder, weight for weight, than an enthusiastic farmyard cockerel greeting the morning sun, despite weighing less than a one pound coin! We've explored London's dancing newts, tenacious tadpoles that face odds of 100 to 1 in the fight for survival, the astonishing dance of the beautiful great crested grebe and lots, lots more.

The column was introduced by Sir David Attenborough in February and is now a regular fixture on the @esviews letters page. Do check it out every Friday; we hope you'll find it packed full of interesting, fun facts and eye-opening info from our wildlife experts. And if you like what you see, do let the Evening Standard know – we'd like to see more wildlife featured across the newspaper's pages.

www.standard.co.uk/search/site/wildlondon

Wild volunteering

We have created a new map of wild volunteering opportunities across London, to make it easier for supporters to do their bit for the capital's wildlife and wild spaces.

Whether you want to try river restoration, meadow management, wildlife surveying, or environmental education - we're sure there's something wild and wonderful you'll want to get involved with near you! Discover how you can volunteer for nature:

www.wildlondon.org.uk/volunteer-with-us

Front cover: Hairy-footed flower bee © Penny Frith

Top banner: Lesser stitchwort © London Wildlife trust



© Penny Dixie

Wild Weekend at Woodberry Wetlands

Discover London's wild side with an entire weekend of free wildlife-themed events at Woodberry Wetlands, celebrating nature in the heart of London. Discover just how much wildlife lives alongside us, from tiny tadpoles to powerful birds of prey.

The Wild Weekend on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th April marks the first birthday of this award-winning nature reserve and is designed to appeal to everyone from curious nature novices to seasoned wildlife watchers; with wildlife workshops, stimulating talks and debates, guided walks and fun family activities.

Tasty refreshments will be available at the fully licensed Coal House Café and at a special Wild Woodberry Farmers Market, where locally-produced organic food, drinks and crafts will be available to buy. We will also have live music provided by the Nest Collective. The Wild Weekend festival is just a ten-minute walk from Manor House tube station on the Piccadilly Line and runs from 9am until 6pm on both days. We hope to see you there! www.woodberrywetlands.org.uk/events



Get wet for wildlife!

Could you take on a challenge for London's wildlife? We are looking for six wild swimmers to take on the Swim Serpentine challenge, an open water swimming event staged in the

beautiful setting of the Serpentine lake of London's Hyde Park.

This hugely popular, mass participation swim will take place on Saturday 16th September at the same outdoor swimming venue as the London 2012 Olympic Games - and we've got six free places for swimmers who are ready to raise cash for London's wildlife!

If you are a confident outdoor swimmer and want to raise money for the Trust, email Cathy on cgale@wildlondon.org.uk and let us know if you'd like to swim either one mile, two miles, or six miles. www.swimserpentine.co.uk

Mighty mollusc found in Chiswick

A London Wildlife Trust conservation team was thrilled to find two-lipped door snails living on fly-tipped rubble near the River Thames. This is the first time this rare species of snail has been recorded in the capital for three years. The team was working with Hounslow Council to improve the habitat for molluscs at Duke's Hollow nature reserve, near Chiswick Bridge, in the hope of encouraging the two-lipped door snail and another rare species, the German hairy snail, but they were surprised to discover a number of the snails already at the site, with the first one found grazing on a chunk of concrete near a busy road.

The snail was probably once much more populous along the River Thames, but riverside development and flood-control schemes during the 19th and especially the 20th century have obliterated many suitable locations for both the two-lipped door snail and the German hairy snail. Fortunately nature reserves such as Duke's Hollow provide a safe haven for these rare snails.



Two-lipped door snail © London Wildlife Trust

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[wild.london](https://www.instagram.com/wild.london/)



Two stag beetles fighting © Simon de Glanville

Stand by for stag beetles

London's stunning stag beetles will soon be taking to our streets, promoting amazement (and sadly, sometimes fear) with their relatively large size and the males' spectacular 'antlers'. The beetles are harmless to us and other wildlife; the males' mean-looking 'antlers' may resemble the menacing pincers of a crab but they cannot pinch, they are only used to wrestle other males out of the way as they compete for female attention.

These are the biggest land beetles in Britain, and every year we ask Londoners to tell us where they spot these marvellous, but endangered beetles. They are locally extinct across much of the country, but survive

across the capital, with sightings reported from almost every London borough. Last year we received over 1,000 reports of sightings – an impressive haul that we aim to improve on this year!

Stag beetles spend most of their lives as larvae, slowly munching their way through dead, untreated wood such as old tree stumps or logs. After four to seven years they emerge as short-lived adult beetles, usually between mid-May and late July, and immediately face a host of urban challenges as they strive to breed.

Despite being well armoured they are relatively easy pickings for cats, foxes and the

capital's crows and magpies. Indeed, it's not uncommon to find the distinctive remains of a stag beetle rather than a living, breathing specimen. They also face the very real risk of being stamped on by those who don't share our love of wildlife, and road traffic can take a heavy toll.

But, despite all these challenges, they seem to survive. If you see a stag beetle this year, even a dead one, please tell us. Just visit our website and fill in the online form, where you can also upload photographs. If you are on Twitter you can also follow @StagBeetleSam for regular updates and pics!

www.wildlondon.org.uk/stag-beetle-survey



Detecting at Kidbrooke Village © Berkeley Homes

Dragonfly Detectives

Stag beetles aren't the only insects we're interested in. We are also seeking your reports of dragonflies and damselflies from across London. These beautiful, nimble airborne predators can be used to indicate the health of London's waterways, as they depend on clean freshwater during their larval stages, during which they hunt other aquatic species.

Dragonflies and damselflies are also quick to recolonise waterbodies that have recovered from pollution or have been restored by wildlife teams, so their distribution across London can tell us a lot about where things are getting better (or worse).

Last year one of our research volunteers, Sonja Todd, even found a species that had never been seen in central London before. The willow emerald damselfly is a recent arrival to England, with only a few previous sightings on the outskirts of London. Spotted in Hackney's Clissold Park, we are very keen to see where else we can spot it this year!

Anyone can become a Dragonfly Detective and help us record dragonflies and damselflies across London. You may have a favourite river or pond where you regularly see these beautiful insects, but even an unexpected glimpse in a back garden or park will provide us with useful data. To share a sighting doesn't require any expert knowledge, our online form is easy to use.

If you want to become a real expert, we will be running training workshops during June and July in locations across London. You can also get involved by helping us as we clean up waterways across London. Altogether London's waterways stretch farther than the M25, so there's plenty for us to do! www.wildlondon.org.uk/dragonfly-detectives



Large red damselfly © Iain Leach

DRAGONFLY DETECTIVES DAY

Join us for a special Dragonfly Detectives Day at Woodberry Wetlands on Saturday 21st May. We will be celebrating dragonflies and damselflies, as well as the health of London's waterways, with a whole host of fun, family friendly activities. It's a chance to meet the experts and learn about these fascinating insects, and it's all free!

www.wildlondon.org.uk/whats-on



Broadwater lake © Tim Hill

HS2 and the Colne Valley

The first phase of the controversial High Speed 2 railway has received Royal Assent and construction work will start this spring. Our Frays Farm Meadows nature reserve, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its rare wet grassland and sedge beds, is now under threat from a proposed HS2 haulage road. Following lengthy negotiation we have been assured that if the road goes ahead an appropriate package of restoration and compensation will be made for damage to the Meadows; but for now, details have yet to emerge.

The Colne Valley Regional Park is likely to be hit hard by HS2. The Trust continues to be involved in the development of a plan that will see an additional £3m delivered to help mitigate the impacts of HS2 on this sensitive landscape on the western edge of London.

Meanwhile, we are delighted to be a partner in the Colne Valley Landscape Partnership project – *A landscape on the edge*. The project is being led by Groundwork and could lead to a funding pot of £2m to help protect these important ‘edgelands’ of London, home to five of our nature reserves. We are now working with partners, including neighbouring Wildlife Trusts, to encourage wildlife-friendly conservation grazing and increase water vole populations.



Children’s artwork celebrates nature at Woodberry Wetlands

Talented pupils from Jubilee Primary School in Stoke Newington have created a stunning mural of Woodberry Wetlands featuring colourful wildlife and the reserve’s distinctive urban skyline. Children from several classes visited Woodberry as part of the Trust’s outdoor education sessions, funded by players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

Inspired by their visits, schoolchildren aged between four and 11 years created images that were then digitally combined on aluminium sheets. The artwork is now permanent displayed in the school grounds.

During their visits children investigated the wildlife at Woodberry, with pond-dipping sessions and mini-beast hunts overseen by Trust staff. More eager pupils are returning this spring!

Camley Street Natural Park set for new visitor centre

For more than 30 years our staff and volunteers have been working from a repurposed cricket pavilion at Camley Street Natural Park, installed back in 1984. The wooden structure has seen tens of thousands of school children and other visitors cross its doors over the years, but it is now well past its best.

Much as we (and the mice) are fond of the building, it is time to move on. We are pleased to announce that we have secured funding of £77,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund to initiate the development stage of creating a new visitor centre, with construction due to start in 2018 and an opening date set for 2019.

The majority of the new building will be constructed off-site, with pre-assembled components delivered to the reserve and then fitted together. This should keep costs down and reduce the time that we will need to close the reserve to the public.

The King's Cross area has changed beyond recognition over the last 30 years, the focus of huge investment and development. Camley Street Natural Park has survived and flourished throughout this period of change, saved initially by the actions of local people working alongside the Trust and sustained since then by the hard work of our staff, our volunteers, and the valued support of London Wildlife Trust members.

We cannot tell what the next 30 years will bring, but we have every intention of ensuring that wildlife continues to thrive in London, not just at Camley Street Natural Park but throughout the city.



New rain gardens will reduce Wandle flood risk

Reducing flooding and pollution is the aim of a new Trust project encouraging people to create greener communities. Wandle Rain Gardens will help people who live near the River Wandle to create green roofs, rain gardens, install water butts and even dig up concrete and tarmac, in order to create attractive landscape features known as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that will help retain rainwater and reduce the impacts of both flooding and summer drought.

Most rainfall currently flows into drains, and the sewage system, instead of being naturally absorbed by soil. Even moderate rainfall can lead to water overflowing from the streets and sewers into rivers, with potentially disastrous effects on wildlife and human health. The Wandle was once badly polluted but it is now one of the few rivers in London where wild brown trout is seen, feeding on insects and other small fish that make the river their home.

Wandle Rain Gardens aims to raise awareness of how creating SuDS, wasting less tap water in our homes and gardens, and being more aware of our environmental impacts, can bring real benefits and create streets and surroundings that are greener and more pleasant to live in. As part of the project Trust staff and volunteers are now working in Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth boroughs with local communities and organisations to help make this happen.

Trust Officer Joanna Ecclestone said: "We hope to inspire people with practical and attractive ways of adapting their gardens and public spaces, benefiting these communities for decades to come."

Wandle Rain Gardens is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and is being delivered with local residents as part of the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership. It complements the wider Wandle Valley Regional Park initiative.

Mini-mouse discovery could harvest results

The discovery of a sadly deceased harvest mouse, close to Claybury Woods in Redbridge in February, suggests that these tiny mammals, with a body length of just 5-8cm, may be more common in London than realised.

Ten harvest mice have been recorded near Crayford and we found a possible nest, a sphere of grasses, at Frays Farm Meadows last year. There was also a likely recording at nearby Fairlop Plain.

So named because of their association with the cornfields and hedgerows of an earlier, farmed countryside, harvest mouse numbers have plummeted as intensive agriculture changed the landscape, declining in Britain by over 70%. The mouse's apparent survival in a number of wilder pockets of London is something to celebrate, but more surveying is required if we are to gain a better understanding of harvest mouse distribution, and to help us sustain their numbers.



Harvest mouse © Richard Bowler

My beaver epiphany

At home with The Wildlife Trusts



European beaver © Ron Walsh

Bestselling author Tom Cox grew up thinking beavers were extinct in Britain. Then a small population appeared near him. With Devon Wildlife Trust's help, he went for a look

I did not travel to the River Otter, in east Devon, expecting to see wild beavers. Just to be within 100 yards of them and see their teeth marks on the trees would have been exciting enough for me.

But as dusk fell, and my friend Sarah and I and Stephen from Devon Wildlife Trust made our way quietly along the bank of the river we heard a loud splash. About 20 seconds later, two otters dipped past us at speed. They had a rattled look about them, like thugs who'd picked the wrong target. The size of the initial splash, Stephen said,

suggested the commotion was about more than just otters. A larger animal had been involved: perhaps a dog, perhaps a beaver.

Nobody knows exactly how beavers first appeared on the River Otter, but sightings began in 2008.

Not long afterwards, Devon's new beavers began to breed. The government then decided to have them removed from the river. Fortunately, Devon Wildlife Trust opposed this removal and managed to get a licence for them to live on the river for five years and their effect on the landscape to

be monitored. There are now thought to be around 20 beavers.

People were wild camping near the river as Stephen, Sarah and I walked along its bank. The 1980s anthem *Golden Brown* by The Stranglers tinkled through the trees from a portable stereo near their tent just downstream. I worried that The Stranglers might alienate the beavers but as Stephen, Sarah and I stood quietly in a dark spot under an ash tree and waited for the song to finish, almost exactly on cue with its final bars a beaver of not dissimilar colour to the

*Could this become a common sight again?
Devon Wildlife Trust believes there is a
strong ecological case*

one celebrated by The Strangers swam out from the opposite bank. It was more serene than I imagined, far more serene than the otters we'd just seen, but when it climbed out onto a small sandbank just upstream and began scratching itself that serenity quickly vanished. "It looks like a giant tea cosy," said Sarah, accurately.

I worried that The Strangers might alienate the beavers

Beavers are vegetarians, and – contrary to what you might have read in CS Lewis – not the kind who sneakily eat fish as well. They were last seen in Britain some time in the 16th Century. The thickness of their pelts and the fact that their castor sacs (scent



glands) contained castoreum, which was used as a tincture in perfume, meant they were hunted to extinction. You don't hear people wanting a perfume that smells of castor sacs these days so you'd hope that, were beavers to return to the UK they'd have an easier time. Their ability to fell trees and build dams could also have a positive effect, slowing floods, and creating wildlife-friendly pools and bogs. After a grooming session this one swam 15 yards upstream and began to munch loudly through a bank of Himalayan balsam.

I thought of my mum, who'd had problems with balsam in her garden, and pictured me and the beaver ringing the doorbell on her birthday, and me telling the beaver to hide behind the hedge, just to make the occasion that bit more special.

She began to munch loudly on Himalayan balsam

Whereas otters live in holts, beavers live in lodges. This is one of many things I love about beavers. It tells you what you need to know about them straight away: they're a bit fancy, but not too fancy. This particular beaver's lodge had been built in the bank of the river directly opposite us, amidst the roots of overhanging trees. Spotters from Devon Wildlife Trust had thought that there were three kits living with this beaver and her far more publicity-shy male friend – but six days after my visit a resident of the local village took a photo which clearly showed five kits. Having seen this, I drove back that evening and, after sitting on the bank for very little time at all, I saw two kits swimming out, following the exact same route that their mum had the previous week, climbing the bank and chomping on the balsam, albeit with considerably less volume.

After a quarter of an hour a dog walker called David arrived. David has been watching the beavers for over three years, since before their presence was even revealed in the news. "The male never comes out," he said. "The female's very casual now, though. I held a branch of willow in the water for her not long ago and she started to chew it." Stephen said the adult beavers were around the size of a cocker spaniel but, looking at David's cocker spaniel, Willow, I decided this was an underestimation. The adult female beaver looked a fair match on the scales for his labrador, Bracken.

As dark fell and the kits returned to the lodge, David and I walked back along the river in the direction of my car. David, who clearly had more finely tuned hearing than me, stopped abruptly every minute or two to investigate a distant splash or a rustle in the reeds. I had to remind myself not to get complacent about this: in less than a week I had seen three examples of an animal that, just a few years ago, I'd assumed I'd never see here during my lifetime.

Tom Cox is a writer and cat lover. His books include *Bring me the head of Sergio Garcia* and the Sunday Times top ten bestseller *The Good, The Bad And The Furry*

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Devon...

In 2011, with the help of Devon Wildlife Trust, two beavers were released into a fenced enclosure in the Tamar headwaters. Their activities and effects were studied closely (*see box, right*)



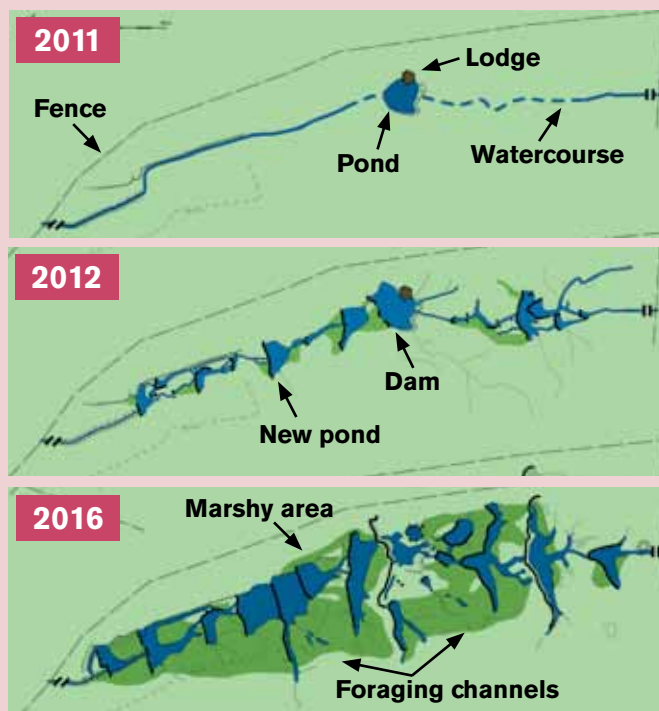
One of the dams made by the Tamar beavers © Nick Upton/Naturepl



The beaver effect

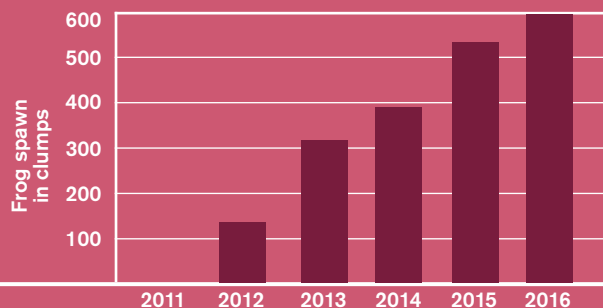
These three maps span five years of the Tamar beaver study. Their three hectare enclosure consisted of culm grassland encroached by willow, birch and gorse, with a trickle of a stream. The beavers quickly felled trees and built dams to create the deep water they prefer. Within a year there were eight ponds with a combined area of 900m². The knock-on effects (see graphs below) were remarkable.

The female had kits in 2013.



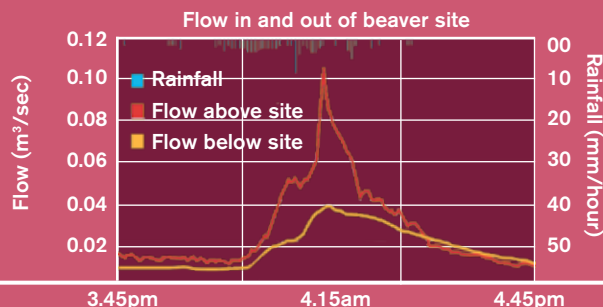
More wildlife

From mosses to invertebrates to bats, a wider range of species used the site once the beavers had got to work. Particularly impressive was the dramatic yearly increase in frog spawn clumps



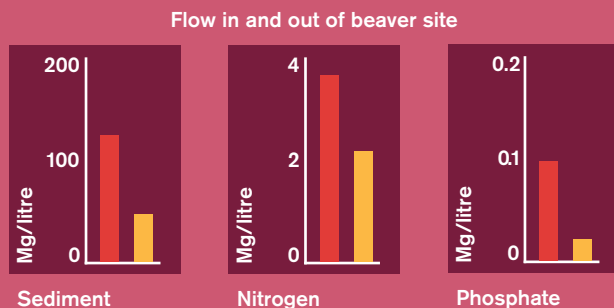
Slower flow

Scientists measured flows into and out of the beaver enclosure. The results showed how the dams and ponds hold back water. Across a catchment, beavers might be able to stop floods being so severe



Less pollution

Intensively managed farmland above the site produced soil, nitrogen and phosphate runoff. As the water slowed through the ponds, a high proportion of these pollutants were filtered out.



One step at a time

Volunteering for London's wildlife



He started as a member, became a volunteer, and is now a trustee. Richard Grimshaw discusses his growing involvement with the Trust

The thought of volunteering with London Wildlife Trust probably conjures up images of cutting back scrub, building footpaths, surveying species, or wading in rivers – and you wouldn't be wrong in assuming this is much of what our work entails.

Indeed, this is exactly the sort of practical conservation activity that lured Richard Grimshaw to start volunteering five years ago. As a Trust member since 2002, Richard, a former social worker from south London, was already interested in the work we do around London. "It was when I retired that I got involved on a regular basis," he explains. "I go walking a lot and I enjoy the outdoors. In terms of wildlife my knowledge is quite general, although I am reasonably good on plant identification – I think it is because they stay still! I am actually more interested in habitats and ecosystems rather than particular species.

"I had been a member of London Wildlife Trust for a long time anyway, and had been interested in practical conservation.

Sydenham Hill Wood was the first nature reserve where I volunteered regularly. It is one of the larger wild places near to where I live in south London. Then I started looking for other opportunities. Most weeks I am doing some practical conservation work, and sometimes I'm doing four days a week. I also enjoy inducting and coaching other volunteers, and I occasionally run workdays in the Wood."

Where does Richard most enjoy volunteering? "The number of years we have spent clearing trees and scrub at Hutchinson's Bank has been very rewarding. Seeing how that area has changed, that space there is now potential chalk grassland. Being able to see the flowering plants on the chalk sites and the butterflies and insects they attract – I can see the hard work has paid off."

As a regular volunteer Richard became well known to Trust staff and a couple of years ago was asked if he would consider standing for election to our Board of Trustees. "I have got the time and the energy so I thought it would be good to be more involved

in the organisation, in a more general strategic way," says Richard. "I also thought it would be useful if there was someone else on the Board who gets stuck in working on the reserves, to bring that perspective.

"You need to have enough knowledge of what's going on, and then to be able to ask questions and be prepared to challenge proposals and contribute to Board decisions. To make the role useful you do need to be prepared. You want to tap into the right range of skills and experience."

Trustees are volunteers, just like the people who spend their time outdoors with a rake or a pair of shears. But while attending Board meetings isn't what Richard first imagined he'd be doing, he still has time to enjoy the wildlife that makes London special. "Recently we were at Hutchinson's Bank when a young female kestrel came down and perched on a gate post by this area we had just brush cut. I had never seen one that close – we watched her for ages, flying from post to post."

Threecorner Grove

A chalk woodland wonder



Head south by tram to enjoy an undisturbed, wild woodland

At the Trust we look after three triangular woodland reserves; Gunnersbury Triangle in Chiswick is famed for the campaign to save it in the 1980s and while Denham Lock Wood may be less well known, it is a fantastic wet woodland near Harefield, home to water vole, glow-worm and the rare Desmoulin's whorl snail. And down south, almost on the borders of Surrey, sits Threecorner Grove, a triangular woodland that neighbours Hutchinson's Bank in New Addington, and serves almost to link that site with Chapel Bank to the south-west. We have been caring for the Grove, on behalf of Croydon Council, since 1997.



Archangel in Threecorner Grove
© London Wildlife Trust



Wood sorrel © London Wildlife Trust

At just under two hectares Threecorner Grove is a magical stand of ancient chalk woodland, overseen by a tall canopy of oak, ash and wild cherry, with field maple, small-leaved lime, and whitebeam trees, some of which tower up to 25 metres. The shrub-layer includes hazel and wayfaring-tree, as well as aromatic honeysuckle and wild rose. The grand wild cherries are particularly magnificent; some of the largest on any of our reserves; the largest so tall that their white blossom is almost impossible to see against the sky.

The woodland is banked, its floor facing gently northwards, and at this time of year it is bedecked in a riot of colour – the whites of wood anemones, wood sorrel, wild garlic and greater stitchwort; the purplish iridescence of bluebell, dog violets and bugle; the chromatic splendour of lesser celandine, primrose, and yellow archangel; and the pinkish hues of red campion and hedge woundwort. These, together with evidence of long-standing earth banks along its edges, are testimony to Threecorner Grove's age and stability; a woodland that has been more or less undisturbed for possibly hundreds of years.

A typical range of woodland birds, including green and lesser spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and treecreeper, are found in Threecorner Grove, as well as mammals such as brown long-eared bat, muntjac and roe deer, bank vole and wood mouse. Large Roman snails can be seen clumped on the lower parts of tree trunks.

Today we are able to care for this reserve with a light touch, with little work required other than the removal of invasive bramble. High winds over recent years have felled some trees, but aside from ensuring these don't block the adjacent road, we allow these to decay naturally, providing a home to stag beetles, other invertebrates and a host of fungi.

HOW TO GET THERE

To visit Threecorner Grove hop on Tramlink route 3 via Wimbledon or central Croydon and head to the terminal stop at New Addington, from where Threecorner Grove, Hutchinson's Bank and Chapel Bank are a short walk away. See our website for more information www.wildlondon.org.uk/reserves

London's woodpeckers

Rooftop headbangers and long tongued ant-eaters



Great spotted woodpeckers © Phil Winter/flickr.com/philwinter

Daniel Greenwood tunes into the capital's wonderful woodpeckers

It's a sound that stops many in their tracks; the rattling in the canopy of woods, parks and gardens. It's the sound of spring breaking through, as winter retreats for another year. Our wildlife is getting busy as it sets out on the quest for new life.

Britain is home to three species of woodpecker and in January we begin to hear the hammering and drumming of the great spotted woodpecker, as male birds mark new territories. It's a bird that is becoming more and more familiar to us in London as numbers increase.

Affectionately known as the 'great spot', this woodpecker's favoured habitat

is oak woodland with plenty of rotting branches, trunks and limbs in which to create a new hole each year. The Trust's woodland reserves such as Sydenham Hill Wood, Oak Hill Wood, Gutteridge Wood and Gunnersbury Triangle, as well as semi-wooded reserves such as Crane Park Island, provide ample habitat for the bigger of our two *Dendrocopos* woodpeckers. *Dendrocopos* translates from Greek as 'wood-striker'.

Even in residential Peckham, at the Centre for Wildlife Gardening, a great spotted woodpecker regularly visits the garden on its rounds, using the top of a

conifer in a nearby garden to survey the landscape. The great spots are now our most successful and generalist woodpecker.

One thing that members of the Trust may have noticed in suburban locations is the woodpecker drumming on aerials and receivers. In Forest Hill a great spot has found that the plastic box used to improve TV signals makes decent percussion. It's a wonder that this hammering on hard surfaces doesn't cause the birds injury, but evolution has equipped them with shock absorbers in the back of their skulls that cushion the blow. It's not the same as banging your head against the wall.



There are actually four members of the woodpecker family deemed native to Britain, but one is now classified extinct as a breeding bird; the wryneck still migrates from Africa each spring in small numbers. In 1904 a wryneck nested on Cox's Walk in Sydenham Hill, in what was thought by the observer to be one of the last nests in his time.

Another of our four species has declined at a rate that has baffled ornithologists. The lesser spotted woodpecker was noted by previous staff at Sydenham Hill Wood up until 2008. Many visitors and attendees to events have asked where this bird has gone, while many claim to have seen it on their bird feeders when really it is likely to have been the great spot. The odd autumnal record does crop up as the lesser spots are migratory, with one seen in 2015 in Brockwell Park, Herne Hill.

One possible theory for the decline of lesser spotted woodpeckers relates to the rise of the great spot and the disappearance of starlings from London's woods as a breeding bird. When starling numbers were higher in woods – they no longer breed at Sydenham Hill Wood or Cox's Walk, whereas it's still the norm in continental European woods – they provided more competition for great spots. This gave more space for the lesser spots, being much smaller. As starlings and their ruckus have left the woods, the great

spots have increased in number because of the reduced competition and the boom in garden bird food. Lesser spots require a smaller hole in a tree to nest and if a great spot chooses the nest they can make the hole bigger and the lesser spots are pushed out.

Lesser spotted woodpeckers, however, are not extinct as breeders like the wryneck and still have strongholds in Britain. The most important place for them is the New Forest, the mythical heartland of ancient English woods. There the management of the woods has remained the same for centuries, pointing to another reason for the species' decline away from protected woods. British wildlife is under increasing pressure from development and the loss of available food. So the two factors which are most harming lesser spots, and starlings, too, are a lack of habitat and food.

The loss of food has arisen from invertebrate life being harmed by agricultural intensification and a tidying up of green spaces, reduced garden space, and general overuse of harmful, residual pesticides. Another key change is the loss of old orchards, a traditional habitat disappearing in Britain and one of the lesser spot's favoured habitats.

The other member of the British quartet is the green woodpecker. Green woodpeckers are different to the spotted



woodpeckers because they don't hammer to mark their territories but instead call, what was known for centuries as 'yaffling' – an old name for a green woodpecker is 'yaffle'. It's a laugh-like call that can be heard most clearly in woods and parks with mature trees, where green woodpeckers also nest.

The call has a prehistoric feel about it, echoing deep into woodland, as the reverberation recedes. Greens differ again from the spotted woodpeckers because of their feeding habits, spending their time searching for ant colonies in woods and lawns. Naturally grassy sports pitches with a surrounding area of mature trees are a good place to find these birds. They lie low, shooting their long tongues down into ant nests to find food. It's something you are very unlikely ever to see a great spotted woodpecker do.

For those curious and unsatisfied by the array of woodpeckers in London, remember that you will have to travel to continental Europe to find a greater diversity. Arriving in France you could meet with the biggest of all the European woodpeckers, the black woodpecker, and heading as far as the great ancient forests of the Czech Republic, Poland or Romania, you can find as many as seven species. In British terms, the health of London's woodpeckers is a reflection of the country's environmental health as a whole.

Going wild on campus

Making room for wildlife in central London



Installing swift boxes at UCL

Students and staff are working together to understand and conserve the capital's wildlife

Famous for its research and teaching excellence but less so for its wildlife, University College London (UCL) is a world leading university. Now, a dedicated group of staff and students have set out to find what species live around campus and are using this information to improve the habitat for wildlife.

UCL has been working with London Wildlife Trust for a number of years to progress a Biodiversity Action Plan and strategy, looking to enhance existing green space and where possible, create new. This is quite a challenge in the built environment, with significant pressures on space. However, progress is being made, both through UCL Estates installing a number of green roofs on UCL buildings and student garden projects in departments and halls of residence.

The UCL Conservation Society – made up of staff and students with an interest in nature - has helped to develop priorities by surveying for bird and other wildlife species on campus. Every two weeks a group of early risers gather to walk through campus and the surrounding squares to count everything from crows to goldcrests. Amazingly, the group have sighted 31 different species of birds to date. This has included birds such as great spotted woodpecker, peregrine falcon and once, an amazing humming-bird hawk-moth feeding in Gordon Square. These species are successfully carving out an urban existence amongst the London plane trees and famous UCL buildings. These records have helped to identify and target species known to frequent the area, resulting in the recent installation of a number of swift nesting boxes on campus.



Swift © Tristan Bantock

The engagement and enthusiasm of staff and students has been the most pleasing aspect, as many Londoners walk with their heads down oblivious to the urban nature around them. We have been able to inspire a large number of UCL staff and students to keep their eyes and ears out and appreciate that our campus harbours its own wildlife. As more habitat improvements are made, we hope to add to our list of species which make the UCL campus their home.

Evan Landy, UCL Sustainability Team

“When I started taking part in the bird walks, the number of species that could be encountered in central London was a big surprise. While most of these are quite common, the bird walks have always been good for some surprises, including peregrine falcons, sparrowhawks and grey wagtails!” – Lucas von Chamier, 4th year Natural Sciences student & a Conservation Society bird walk leader

Swifts, whose numbers have declined nationally, are one of the most frequently sighted summer birds around UCL. As a result UCL has installed swift nesting boxes on several of its buildings. © Evan Landy

Wild bees

Help for our heroes of pollination



Get a **free** action pack for wild bees

The Wildlife Trusts have joined forces with The Royal Horticultural Society to urge gardeners to do more to help protect bumblebees and solitary bees, heroes of the pollinator world.

We launched the campaign from our Centre for Wildlife Gardening on BBC Breakfast, where our ecologist Mike explained just how easy it is to do your bit for bees. Bees are under increasing pressure due to habitat loss, not just in the countryside but also in cities, as gardens are lost to decking, tarmac and brick.

While the famed honeybee is an excellent pollinator, we are focusing on the equally valuable wild bees, including 24 species of bumblebee and over 200 species of solitary bees. Without bees, we would be unable to grow lots of our favourite foods, including tomatoes, strawberries and green beans. They also contribute over £650 million a year to our economy! As well as being



Hairy-footed flower bee © Penny Frith

fascinating insects, these creatures are a vital part of our world and need our protection.

It's no secret that many pollinators are facing threats, but the good news is that the millions of gardens and green spaces that stretch across London can provide a wonderful home for many bee species, alongside other wildlife. By taking small actions, our gardens can work together as a fantastic, joined-up, bee-friendly environment!

Our wild bee-friendly gardening guide, 'Get your garden buzzing for bees', is free to download and contains lots of facts about the different species of wild bee, their lifecycles and how they nest, as well as practical steps gardeners can take to help them. www.wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk

Bumblebees

Bumblebees may nest in old mouse holes, spots under garden sheds, or even in upturned flower pots. To take flight, they need to be warm, and can often be seen on plants or the ground, buzzing noisily as they warm up their flight muscles. Bumblebees are superb pollinators, and play an important part in the survival of many plants. They have a special trick of buzzing so strongly that even stubborn flowers, like those of the tomato, are forced to release an explosion of nutritious pollen grains.



Tawny mining bee © Penny Frith

Different bumblebee species even have different lengths of tongues, so they can tap into many different flowers.

Hairy-footed flower bee

Hairy-footed flower bees are important pollinators for early spring flowers. Similar in size to bumblebees, they feed on nectar using their long tongues. They nest in the ground or in soft mortar in walls. Common in London, the black, furry females resemble small bumblebees with long orange or yellow hairs on their hind legs. The males are a beautiful, rusty brown and also have long hairs on their legs and feet.

Tawny mining bee

The tawny mining bee is a common, spring-flying, solitary bee, which nests underground, building a little volcano-like mound of soil around the mouth of its burrow. Nests can often be seen in lawns and flowerbeds in gardens and parks. The tawny mining bee is on the wing from April to June, which coincides with the flowering of fruit trees like cherry, pear and apple. The female collects pollen and nectar for the larvae which develop underground, each in a single 'cell' of the nest, and hibernate as pupa over winter. It's always a pleasure to watch these furry, gingery bees visiting their nests in the lawn during the springtime.

The flowers of spring

London bursts into colour



Cowslip © Full Moon Images

Spring arrives with
a seasonal display
of fragrant colour

In April it's not uncommon for phones to ring off the hook across the Trust. The most common enquiry, beyond questions about whether we take in sick or injured animals (we don't), is often about where to see spring flowers. Fortunately we have many reserves under our care where a carpet of bluebells and wood anemones can be seen as the caller might have hoped. In Sydenham Hill Wood there are English bluebells, wood anemones, primroses and violets but a past history of Victorian development and planting schemes has left these once more prominent plants in isolated clumps.

English bluebells also face the threat of hybridisation from ornamental varieties planted by those who lived in mansions that straddled the slopes of Sydenham Hill, from the 1860s to the 1970s. We cling to these small patches of flowers, defined as ancient woodland indicators, because they tell us a great deal about the longevity of the landscape. Sydenham Hill Wood was once part of the Great North Wood, a 5000ha stretch of woods and commons that spread from Selhurst to Deptford. Once this mythical ghost wood flowered profusely with anemones, bluebells and primroses, but a decline in woodland management has led to a loss of these spring symbols. Spring woodland plants have evolved a flowering period that means they arrive before the canopy closes.

The first arrivals

Primroses are one of the first flowers to greet us in the spring, in late winter their tongue-like leaves flopping out from tracksides and rides where they do so well. The common name for the flower has caused some confusion about its place in the order of plants, with many at first thinking it is a member of the rose family. Really it was meant as the 'prima rosa', the first flower of the year.

More confusing is the cowslip, a species which can be found on hillsides along the North Downs where we care for several crucial chalk grassland reserves. Rather than creating health and safety concerns for cattle, the leaves of the cowslip are said to look like the lips of cows peeking out of the soil. The same can be said of the oxlip, another primrose that reminded those who named it of the animals grazing the fields where it grew. Perhaps they even meant the wild ox or auroch, a beast extinct for nearly 400 years in Europe.

Buttercups and windflowers

Spring is a time of arriving buttercups, with the bright yellow patches of lesser celandines bringing welcome colour to woods and gardens. A more mysterious member of the buttercup family is the wood anemone, a resident of ancient woods. When the sun rises so do the white flowers, revealing yellow stamens. When closed some flowers have a pinkish blush to the rear of their petals.

Wood anemone was once known as windflower because it was thought to flower when the first spring breezes blew. On our reserves where it grows naturally, we know the woods are over 400 years old, such is the slowness of the plant's spread. When it grows in open land it is less clear, as it is sometimes known to persist in meadows and so is not always a sign of recent woodland having been grubbed out.

It is said that the plant is so slow in colonising that it takes 50 years to spread a metre across the ground. In a world of great environmental change and upheaval, wood anemones appear to be one of London's most vulnerable wildflowers.



Early dog violet © Brian Eversham

Dog violets

It is not only in the woods that you find some of the earliest spring flowers; many are mobile. Pavements that are yet to be sprayed with herbicide are the perfect niche for common dog violets. These pretty little flowers appear on swan-neck stems from heart-shaped leaves and can be found in the cracks between brickwork, garden lawns and in woods.

Early dog violets can be an assured indicator of ancient woodland if you can learn how to identify them. Violets grow in profusion in coppiced hazel woods, where light is allowed in through the cutting and harvesting of the wood. The dark green fritillary, a butterfly, lays its eggs on common dog violet and has suffered a sharp decline in numbers because of a decline in coppiced woodland and associated wildflowers since the Second World War.

For your eyes only

Bluebells, ramsons, lily-of-the-valley and herb-paris are some of the ancient woodland lilies that can still be found in the woods of London. The latter flowers are far rarer today. A recent fashion for foraging has meant that many people are heading out and picking the leaves of ramsons or wild garlic from woods and trackways. Many of London's woods lack viable populations of these plants and so the welfare of wildlife should come first in this case. Many respected botanists argue that foraging does not harm plant populations and that scaremongering only acts to distance people from nature. But many of these botanists spend their time in places where the plants are abundant, well connected and in no danger of becoming locally extinct. In London we face the challenge of giving our woodland lilies the space and safe passage



Wild Garlic © Full Moon Images

to become more prominent again, for the necessities of the wildlife that needs them as food and those of us who hold a spring wood in such high regard.

One lily that certainly does suffer from foraging and trampling is the English bluebell. This 'melancholic', drooping flower suffers when the leaves are trodden on. This is because they determine their leaf number in the autumn and are unable to put on secondary growth in the way that oaks can produce new leaf growth from dormant buds. It should act as a reminder that these plants are very important in the connection they offer us to the natural world and that we should also respect their need for space, too.

When our office phones ring this spring it will be a great relief that we can direct members of the public to their local wood or meadow in search of spring flowers. We'll do so with a reminder: these jewels of nature are precious and they need our stewardship to make each spring worth celebrating. In London we are lucky to still have them.



Lesser celandine © Penny Frith



Bluebell © Full Moon Images

Feeling better outside

Feeling better inside



At the Trust's Centre for Wildlife Gardening, social gardening fulfils all five 'Ways to Wellbeing'

Research continues to show that being active in nature helps us all to grow, live and age well. And that means a 'natural health service' can help reduce the strain on the NHS

People in Britain are living longer. On the face of it, this is good news. This rise in life expectancy, however, is not matched by equivalent levels of good health. For many, it means spending their later years in ill-health and loneliness.

This is a huge challenge for our health services. For example, research by Holt-Lunstad (2015), shows that being lonely is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Fortunately, many studies show that accessible green spaces can work well as social connectors. Quite simply, they can cut the social and economic costs of ageing alone. One solution for both problems is our Potted

History project – a programme of nature-based activities that works with older people in the community and in care settings. Each week, a group meets in Peckham where participants grow herbs, fruit and vegetables in raised beds, observe the wildlife of the garden and create art and craft inspired by nature.

The activities act as prompts for memories, and participants share their experiences, knowledge and thoughts with others – including recipes, gardening tips and jars of homemade chutney. The effect has been extraordinarily positive. Participants are happy to get out of the house, learn new things and interact with others.

"I was really anxious before coming today, but now I feel really relaxed. It's nice being outside," reports one. "Since coming here I've managed to give up smoking," says another. "I was depressed, but now I really look forward to coming here."

Comments like these, alongside other feedback, shows that the Trust's project has reduced social isolation. It has given people a regular opportunity to get out of the house, learn new things and interact with others. The experience of being outdoors in nature has also improved their mood and happiness.

Meanwhile, in the Midlands, a second Wildlife Trust project caters for more vulnerable people who cannot get outside. “We try to bring nature to them as best we can,” explains Angie, a volunteer for Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, which runs outreach support to a care home next to the Skylarks reserve. “Skylarks is such a beautiful reserve, and it’s on the doorstep of the care home. When mobility prevents us from getting outside, we hold wildlife quizzes and activities – but the overriding thing for me is the social aspect.”

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 gave local authorities new responsibilities to improve the health of their populations, and reduce health inequalities. Improving access to green space is probably the most effective way they can achieve these objectives.

Dominic Higgins is Nature and Wellbeing manager at The Wildlife Trusts



Help spread the word

Could you display a poster that shows the benefits of contact with nature? The more people who participate in our Natural Health Service, the better. Order your poster at: www.wildlifetrusts.org/wellbeing



Research proves (again) that nature is good for you

A report by Essex University*, commissioned by The Wildlife Trusts, adds to the ever-growing body of research which shows that nature is good for you.

The key finding is that wildlife-rich environments don’t just keep you physically healthy. They also reduce stress, improve mood, and reduce social isolation.

The report includes work by the New Economics Foundation which is based on the work of 400 scientists around the world. It proposes five evidence-based ‘Ways to Wellbeing’. If you practice them in natural settings, you will improve your physical and mental health.

CONNECT Make friends with the people around you

BE ACTIVE Go for a walk outside

TAKE NOTICE Be aware of the wonders of nature around you

KEEP LEARNING Try something new

GIVE Volunteer or help other people

*Wellbeing benefits from natural environments rich in wildlife, Essex University



Rewriting natural history

Introducing London Wildlife Trust's third ambassador



Tom Holland in Sydenham Hill Wood

Our latest wildlife ambassador talks dinosaurs, dodos and sparrows

Tom Holland is proof that an interest in nature and wildlife can be sparked at any age, at any time. The historian admits to being preoccupied with dinosaurs during his childhood, and disappointed the Wiltshire countryside where he grew up did not contain any. "I didn't realise until later that birds were dinosaurs," says Tom.

The award-winning author moved to London in his early 20s, and it was this change that brought about his interest in the natural world. "Being in the city and seeing foxes and suddenly becoming intensely aware of the wildlife around me made me realise what I had missed in the countryside. "I am always surprised by how green

London is, and the amount of gardens is astonishing. Places like Richmond Park are huge. I also have an admiration for how wildlife survives in a world that is hostile to it. You think of all the obstacles to wildlife there are in London, and yet it is all around us."

It was just four years ago that Tom discovered Camley Street Natural Park, and at the same time London Wildlife Trust. He now names it as his favourite wild place in the city. "It is so unexpected," he says. "When I first came across it I couldn't believe it was there. I always thought of King's Cross as being the ultimate urban place, so when I found it I thought it rapturously wonderful, "The trees and pond life are a stone's throw

from the Eurostar trains. It shows you wildlife can flourish in the most inhospitable places. That's why I admire the work the Trust does."

Tom's enthusiasm for London's wildlife is obvious and makes him another great addition to our growing roster of ambassadors, which already includes 'the urban birder' David Lindo and actress Alison Steadman. Tom, the author of acclaimed works of history such as *Persian Fire* and *Rubicon*, has written for the *Evening Standard* this year about the need to protect London's dwindling hedgehog population. But asked for his favourite species in the city he names, alongside them, sparrows.

"I find it upsetting their numbers have declined so much. Sparrows are the spirit of London's wildlife."

While Tom has yet to pen a book on the subject of the natural world, he names *The Song of the Dodo* by David Quammen as his favourite. "It is about what makes species on islands so distinctive," says Tom. "But it is also about what we are doing to wildlife now – the hedgehogs living in Regents Park are essentially on an island because they have nowhere else to go.

"The scale of environmental impacts over the past century is unprecedented, but the capacity for humans to induce extinction goes back a long way; the impact of the Romans on the range of the lion in North Africa, for example. One of the most haunting images of the suffering of wildlife portrays Assyrian kings killing a lion – the paradox is that we destroy it because we admire it."

And what is the biggest threat to wildlife in London? "Cars," states Tom without hesitation. "Roads slice up habitats and the fumes are terrible for birds. In Brixton Hill where I live it is wall-to-wall traffic. We have to change that."

Explore wild London

Enjoy wildlife events across the capital



© Penny Dixie

Spring at Woodberry Wetlands

As well as our free **Wild Weekend** on Saturday 29th May and Sunday 30th April (see page 3) we have a host of inspiring activities lined up at the Wetlands. Learn to forage for wild food plants, explore your artistic side with our art classes, or enjoy a beekeeping lesson. Children will love our outdoor adventure clubs and free nature sessions on Sundays. Guided walks include dawn chorus breakfasts, bats and nocturnal wildlife, local heritage and history, and we have regular bird watching walks. Our ever popular wild yoga classes combine nature and wellbeing and we will also be hosting special evening events, including free events for Trust members.

All profits from the events we run at Woodberry Wetlands are invested into conservation work. By taking part you directly contribute to the protection of London's wildlife. Find out more at www.woodberrywetlands.org.uk

Members' only evenings

We will be running special members' evenings at Woodberry Wetlands on the first Wednesday of each month from June to September 2017, from 6.00pm – 9.00pm. Members of London Wildlife Trust will be able to enjoy exclusive access to this premier reserve. To keep informed, sign up to our monthly supporters' newsletter at www.bit.ly/wild-sign-up or contact our membership team on 020 7803 4272 membership@wildlondon.org.uk



Sydenham Hill Wood

Visit this beautiful south London woodland for a range of walks and activities. We'll be enjoying an evening bird walk on Wednesday 24th May, an evening tree walk on Wednesday 31st May and a wildflower walk on Sunday 25th June. Chill out with 'forest immersion' sessions on Saturday 27th May (lunchtime), on the evening of Monday 29th May and with a special baby-friendly session on Friday 2nd June. We'll also have family storytelling in the afternoon and evening of Saturday 3rd June. Or just come and enjoy the woods as they are!

Centre for Wildlife Gardening

Our nature mashup on 1st and 2nd June is a fun, free family learning course for local parents and children. We also have 'garden immersion' sessions on Tuesday evening 30th May, a baby-friendly session on Thursday evening 1st June and a regular session on Sunday morning 4th June.

The Great North Wood

Explore south London's ancient woodlands and commons with two free walks, at Southwark's One Tree Hill on Tuesday 30th May and at Biggin Wood in Norbury on Thursday 1st June.

Crane Park Island

Discover the amazing animals that live in the River Crane with our family friendly pond-dipping session on the morning of Tuesday 30th May and the afternoon of Wednesday 14th June, and explore your artistic talents with our family printmaking on Thursday 1st June in the iconic Shot Tower. We will be discovering the nature reserve's explosive history with a guided walk on Sunday 4th June and will be exploring a more calming side of the Island with a guided herb walk on Saturday 24th June.



Find out more

We have more events listed on our website at www.wildlondon.org.uk along with further information on the activities listed here. Some events do require advance booking. Some events require payment and donations are always welcome – any profit we make goes towards protecting London's wildlife. Keep up-to-date with what's on offer by subscribing to our monthly email newsletter. Just go to www.bit.ly/wild-sign-up. You can unsubscribe at any time and you will only hear from London Wildlife Trust – we don't share your information with anyone else.

Your wild London



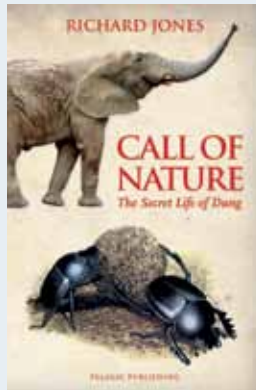
© Penny Dixie

Newt rescue

A huge thank you to the local volunteers who turned out to rescue stranded newts at a location close to our Gunnersbury Triangle nature reserve. Smooth newts spend most of their lives on land, but must return to ponds and lakes to breed. They face many dangers in the city. Measuring only 11cm from nose to tail a roadside kerb presents an insurmountable obstacle and they make a tasty snack for hedgehogs, foxes and herons. To keep safe they move at night, but sometimes they need a helping hand. Our trained volunteers rescued over 700 newts from car parks and drains and ensured they made it to their breeding ponds!



© Penny Dixie



Call of Nature: the secret life of dung

Richard 'Bugman' Jones is an entomologist, a bug hunter, an acclaimed insect specialist. Richard has helped London Wildlife Trust research and identify insect species across London and is also a guaranteed hit at neighbourhood fetes and fairs, where flocks of youngsters patiently queue to get his expert advice on the bugs they have hunted down in nearby foliage, carefully transported in plastic lunch boxes (and safely released after identification).

Insects play a vital role in the dispersal and removal of dung across almost every environment on earth, and in his latest book Richard has turned his eye to the question of poo – where it comes from and where it goes. Informative and thoroughly entertaining, *Call of Nature* introduces us to nature's ultimate recyclers, as they eat, breed in and fight for nutritious dung. Without these busy recyclers we'd have been up to our necks in it long before the invention of the flushing toilet.

From the enigmatic dung-rolling beetles to bat guano and giant elephant droppings, dung creates a miniature ecosystem that *Call of Nature* describes in fascinating detail, with occasional laugh-out-loud anecdotes and revelations. We loved this book,

even the illustrated guide to different scats, spraints, guano and spoor, complete with the interesting nugget that wombats have cube-shaped poo! Recommended reading. Pelagic Publishing are offering members of London Wildlife Trust a 25% discount for online orders of *Call of Nature: the secret life of dung* at www.pelagicpublishing.com. Just use the code **LWT25** before the code expires on 31st May 2017.

30 Days Wild

Make room for nature this June - no matter where you are or how busy your life! Sign up to our 30 Days Wild challenge and we'll send you a pack full of ideas, encouragement and Random Acts of Wildness. You'll also receive a funky wallchart to track your progress, a wild badge, and regular blasts of inspiration throughout June to help you make nature part of your life.

A Random Act of Wildness is anything that you can do in an average working day to bring a little nature into your life. They can take a few seconds, a few minutes, or if you lose yourself completely, a few hours! We've got 101 ideas on our website - but you can make up your own, too!

Take the challenge, all our lives are better if they're a bit wild! www.mywildlife.org.uk/30dayswild



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