

Discovering night time nature
– see page 7

Local Wildlife news

January to April 2025

A news and events
diary from wildlife and
conservation groups in
the Ipswich area



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Produced by the



GREENWAYS
countryside project



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All the conservation organisations working together to inspire local people to help wildlife throughout the town and beyond.

This is your gateway to wildlife groups in Ipswich and other organisations in Suffolk providing environmental information.
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Copies of LWN are available at all Ipswich libraries, at the Reg Driver Centre in Christchurch Park and from leaflet dispensers at the Stable Block in Holywells Park, from the Greenways office at the Scout Hall, Stoke Park Drive, Millennium Wood (Bobbits Lane entrance), Kiln Meadow (Marbled White Drive entrance), The Sandlings, Rushmere (Bixley Drive entrance) and Mill Stream, Rushmere (Glemham Drive entrance).

Ipswich Wildlife Group have a new email address
ipswichwildlifegroup@gmail.com



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Become a member of Ipswich Wildlife Group and support our work at local wildlife sites and our activities spreading enthusiasm for the nature all around us

You can just lend us your support or get involved in our activities

Your membership will help provide valuable influence when we are standing up for local environmental issues

We don't do meetings or annual subscriptions but we will keep you informed of what's going on by email each month.
Just send your contact details to our secretary Leila at ipswichwildlifegroup@gmail.com

Welcome

by **James Baker** *Editor*

Welcome to the winter and spring edition of Local Wildlife News – another wonderful collection of news, views and events from those who are in the forefront of caring for wildlife in the local area.

It is difficult not to refer to all of the bad news relating to wildlife populations, following another strange year climatically – and some of the articles in this issue back this up. It is vitally important though to balance this information with the odd bits of more positive news from our local area and to remain focussed on doing whatever we all can individually and collectively to try to reverse the decline in biodiversity. New habitat creation on pages 9 and 20, effective habitat management on pages 10, 11, 14 and 17 – and loads more chances to get involved in the events diary on page 23!

Apparently small, individual actions really can make a dramatic

difference – and I firmly believe this is what will actually tip the balance in the long run. There is a great example on page 11 where Julian Dowding (Butterfly Conservation) generously praises all involved in the Buckthorns for Brimstones project around 25 years ago, which has quite simply reversed the fortunes of this beautiful butterfly across south Suffolk and beyond. The success was due to Julian's own passion and drive to make a difference, and that is what inspired all of those around him to take part and plant buckthorns in hedges, gardens, parks, nature reserves etc.

In the spring and early summer of 2025, the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Suffolk and Norfolk will be published and there will be a widescale public consultation. The strategy is highly ambitious and full of hope and also clearly underlines the responsibility we all share for recovering nature – it isn't just up to government, authorities, large land owners and corporations – we must all play our own part.



Contents

	Page
Suffolk Wildlife Trust	4
Greenways Countryside Project	8
Butterfly Conservation	11
Ipswich Wildlife Group	12
Friends of Holywells Park	13
Friends of the Dales	14
Wild Ipswich	15
Friends of Belstead Brook Park	16
Portal Woodlands Conservation Group	17
Suffolk Bird Group	18
Friends of Christchurch Park	19
Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Rangers	20
RSPB Ipswich Local Group	21
Snippets	22
Events Diary	23

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The Fox in the Box

Sarah Watts Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group

In April 2018 my trail camera captured the moment a fox appeared in my garden for the first time. The trail camera was there to record the antics of the hedgehogs that I'd been feeding for a number of years and I wanted a 'closer' view of them.



Investigating the hedgehog box



The cubs at breakfast



**Suffolk
Wildlife Trust**

Ipswich Group Newsletter

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We are the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. We offer an interesting range of monthly meetings with guest speakers. Trust members and non-members are equally welcome. During the summer months we offer a variety of trips, some local, others by coach. Details of these and our monthly meetings can be found in our "Dates for your Diary" section or on the website, www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org.

I guess the fox thought the abandoned ends of my neighbour's gardens made for a better den than the nearby railway line embankment and an evening supply of hedgehog food made it worthwhile to move to a new



Fox in the box

location. Six years on and 'Mr & Mrs Fox' are still here.

They, I say they, but there have been several partnerships over the intervening years and the pair have raised between two and six cubs starting in 2019. One year, two of the cubs were born with shortened front legs; a corgi-style fox but they both seemed to manage.

The foxes destroyed my triangular hedgehog feeding station so I replaced it with a plastic storage box with a hedgehog sized hole but the cubs managed to get in, and hence the title of this piece.

They have gone from stealing the hedgehog food to their own supply of dog biscuits just enough so that I can keep an eye on them for welfare reasons. They've even had strawberry jam sandwiches when they showed signs of mange, the jam was dosed with a homeopathic medicine. Not sure if the medicine worked but the foxes liked the sardines I also provided!

My flower borders have been flattened as the cubs play amongst the plants but they do leave my grass alone.

Some neighbours have been less fortunate and had their veg patches dug up regularly; one has given up entirely and now feeds the foxes too!

The local cats tolerate them and the hedgehogs get poked but ignored. The cubs play on my neighbour's trampoline; they have acquired dogs' toys, balls of various sizes and a stuffed teddy to play with. Plastic balls are favoured things to try to eat and ultimately puncture. Earlier this year they managed to find a supply of Christmas jumpers and other items of clothing.

I regularly round up the remains of take away cartons licked clean, bags of rubbish ripped open and investigated,

usually eaten. As I write this piece in November, this year's cubs, four of them, appear to have dispersed, I only see two foxes now but sometimes three.

Would I be without them? No, they brightened my day with their antics over late spring and summer, I even miss the noises they make. So I look forward to spring 2025 the eerie howling as the dog fox calls for his vixen and I think of their and my next adventures.

On a slightly sad note I seem to have lost my hedgehogs. There was one about from January through to April and I did find a young one dead beside my garage in the summer.



A family outing

A behind the scenes peek at planning events for you to enjoy

Roger Pratt *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

I had never been to Trimley Marshes before, despite having been a member of SWT for more than 30 years and living in Ipswich most of my life! Mind you, I had been close to it on a number of occasions, whilst walking along what is now called the King Charles III England Coast Path, at both the south and north ends, but I had not previously set foot into that haven for wildlife that is the Trimley Marshes Nature Reserve. Shame on me I hear you say!

Maybe my inaction was partly due to being put off by the long walk from the visitor car park, in Cordy's Lane, Trimley to the reserve entrance, (advertised on the SWT website as being 45mins) but more about that later!

I had arranged to meet Joe Underwood (SWT Warden) and Phil Whittaker (Volunteer Warden) there on a most marvellous November sunny day and when the Orwell estuary was close to high tide. I was recceing the reserve ahead for planning an activity for the Ipswich SWT Group.



Hobby

It was a Wednesday morning, which I learnt was the volunteers day, and there was an army of volunteers already there, working on numerous projects to benefit the visitors (including humans of course!) and to keep out some undesirable predators.

I was given a tour of the five hides, viewing platform and visitor centre and walked along the section of coast path that I had somehow previously missed, and saw a beautiful well-used thriving oasis of nature, despite proximity to its unlikely benefactor, Felixstowe Docks, the UK's largest container port.

My expert guides told me about all the wonderful things happening on the reserve right now in front of my binoculars and what I could expect to see in May next year, including breeding



Avocets

Redshank, Avocet, Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher, Sedge, Reed & Cetti's Warbler, Water Rail, Pochard, Little Grebe, Bearded Tit, Marsh Harrier, Hobby, Sandwich and Common Tern and perhaps an occasional Bittern ... and who knows what else!

There is also a possibility of seeing a colony of Green Hairstreak butterflies that often make their presence known on a special hawthorn bush outside one of the hides, given the right weather conditions.

All in all it was a great experience for me and I look forward to returning in the summer, so I am now going to put the finishing touches to my planned event.

We have selected a Saturday morning in late May which will be on a high tide, and if we start early enough (ie 8am on-site) and weather permitting, we should be able to observe a team of bird ringers in action, who should be finishing their shift, which actually starts at about 5am!



Green Hairstreak



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Ipswich Group Newsletter

The reserve can only handle groups of up to 30 people, so booking will be essential. We have agreed a cost of £7.50 per head (all proceeds go back to the SWT) After the tour we can take refreshments in the visitor centre and there is even a plumbed-in WC on site! Lastly, for those like me who may be put off visiting because of the long walk to reach the reserve from the special car park, we are arranging for a few cars to informally shuttle people to and from the reserve.

Further details will be available very soon – so watch out for announcements in SWT meetings or on the website.



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Ipswich Group Newsletter

Leisure learning for all

If you are one of those people who loves watching wildlife documentaries, we have a suggestion for something else that you might like to do.

Pretty much every month, the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust arranges an event which is open to anyone interested in our natural world – regardless of whether or not they have joined the charity.

These events raise vital funds for the Trust while helping us all build our knowledge of wildlife. From autumn to spring, there are illustrated presentations on topics ranging from wildlife of Costa Rica to the mixed fortunes of local butterflies. In the summer, a series of trips out and local walks provide a sociable and inspiring few hours.

Here's what's coming up in the next few months – we really hope to see more Local Wildlife News readers coming along.

All of the following events will start at 7.30pm and take place at the Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF. Please note, despite the name, the entrance is on Black Horse Lane!

Entry is only £3 includes tea and coffee and payment can be made by card or cash. There is easy access and a hearing loop.

Events Diary

Wednesday 22nd January 2025 Ian Barthorpe from RSPB Minsmere will give a presentation on Costa Rica

Take a journey from the Caribbean to the Pacific via luxuriant cloud forest as we explore one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. Join Ian, as he searches for the sloth and tree frogs, and goes on a quest for a Quetzal. You will discover why Costa Rica is one of the world's premier wildlife watching destinations.

Wednesday 26th February 2025 Wildlife Expert Adrian Knowles will talk about Historical Ecology

How has the ecology of our land changed over the centuries? To find out, become a countryside detective. As well as changes due to an alteration in our climate there are clues to be found about man's influence, from place names, changes in field patterns, historical documents, and also from the flora and fauna of the area. You may be surprised at what you find.

Wednesday 26th March 2025 Rob Jacques (BTO) speaks about Thirty Years of the Big Garden Birdwatch

The Big Garden Bird Watch began in January 1995, and since then thousands of people have recorded the birds visiting their gardens each week, sending their results to the BTO. Rob will explain how these data are used to monitor changes in populations and species, if there are changes, the causes may be identified, and adaptations made or at least suggested to prevent their decline.



Wednesday 23rd April 2025 Steve Aylward (SWT) will tell us more about conserving butterflies on the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's nature reserves

Steve will talk about the butterflies found on the Trust's Nature Reserves, and the work being undertaken to support important populations of the rarer species. He will also discuss opportunities that the new wilding reserves create for butterflies. This meeting will be preceded by a short AGM.

Full details of dates, times and prices can be found via www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events - just use the drop down filter to search on Ipswich Group events to find them.

And finally, a sneaky preview so you can get the dates in your diary for the summer. We have a birdwatching trip to Trimley Marshes which should include a chance to watch birds being ringed and a visit to one of the county's most wildlife friendly farms. We might also be running a trip to look for native butterflies. Details in the next issue of LWN.

Ipswich is Wild – First steps

Daniel Payne *Wilder Communities Officer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*

This article will reach you in January, right when wildlife is at it's quietest. Hedgehogs will still be hibernating, along with the bats in their roosts. Newts will be resting up in their hollows, and birds will be fluffed up against the winter chill. All will be quiet. And yet, within three months Spring will be underway, nature will be bursting to life and the year's early offspring will be taking their first steps.



Discovering night time nature

My work has been a bit like those young taking baby steps; making initial connections with local community groups, schools and youth groups, and creating my first events. I've worked with St. Joseph's, Murrayfield primary and Northgate secondary to name a few schools that have been investigating nature; from looking at hedgehog prints, to getting to know trees, and a bit of nestbox making thrown in for good measure. On the community groups front, I've been in to visit Leading Lives, worked with Anglia Care Trust and held a wilder communities day with the North West Ipswich community garden. The Scouting organisation has featured heavily in my

youth group sessions, from brownies to beavers and scouts to guides, both getting to know the wildlife in Ipswich's parks and bringing it to their locations.

All of these groups and meetings add up to and encourage a collective action for nature, building toward having one in four people making nature a part of their every day. That ratio, one in four, is the tipping point where society continues to sustain change and move toward an upward trend of action to care for nature. That feeds into the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's aim to have 30% of Suffolk's land abundant in nature, again the tipping point where nature moves onto an



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upward trend. Ipswich is key to that. If you can make an urban environment, almost a desert for nature, rich in wildlife, then just think how abundant the wider county would be. That is the Trust's, and my, aim.

Further to that, and looking ahead to 2025 as a whole, I am aiming to be working with more schools, community groups and youth groups, and getting stuck in to more community outreach, than ever before. On top of that, and most excitingly, I am aiming to start a Wilder Gardens programme, where people bring in photos or drawings of their gardens to drop in sessions across the five postcodes in Ipswich, and we then advise on how to make their gardens even more beneficial for wildlife. Those people then in turn lead sessions, and the movement grows. Keep an eye out for this, and come along if you're interested!



Major grant funded projects

James Baker *Manager, Greenways Countryside Project*

The Greenways Project has been lucky to be awarded substantial grant funding from Suffolk County Council's Ipswich Policy Development Panel fund.



GREENWAYS
countryside project

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The Greenways Countryside Project exists to protect and enhance the countryside, landscape and open space across an area of about 100 square kilometres in and around the town of Ipswich, and home to around one quarter of the population of Suffolk, for the benefit of wildlife and local people. The project relies on volunteers to complete much of its practical conservation work.

The Greenways Project is a very successful and well-established partnership between Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council and the local community.

The first project is to deliver £145,000 worth of access and biodiversity enhancements in the Belstead Brook Park in south-west Ipswich. This project includes 100m of new and refurbished



Boardwalk under construction using local oak

timber boardwalk, over a kilometre of newly surfaced footpath alongside the Brook linking Bobbitts Lane to Bourne Park; a new link path to Stoke Park Drive; bridleway resurfacing; open water creation and reedbed management, along with other minor works.

The new path to Bourne Park is well underway thanks to our amazing volunteers who have helped move more than 75 tonnes of aggregate and build new boardwalk from our own local oak and sweet chestnut timber.

Bourne Park reedbed is one of the least known wildlife hot-spots in the town, but in recent years the reedbed habitat has been drying out and been taken over by advancing scrub. Our work this winter will see the creation of new ponds and scrapes within the reedbeds, along with new linear dykes, allowing views into the site and providing new micro-habitats for different bird and invertebrate species. This stretch of the Brook valley is good for otters, water voles and native brown trout – we hope improvement to the reedbed will help to encourage visits from bearded tits and



Part of the newly surfaced pathway from Bourne Park to Bobbitts Lane



Greenways' Peter Scotcher with the brilliant volunteers and the new boardwalk

All of the work should be completed by the end of March 2025 and will greatly improve recreational access for a large number of residents in the south-west of the town, and encouraging local people to explore further into the countryside.

bittern amongst other species.

The second major project is a 'refresh' of the Old Cattle Yard pocket park on the banks of the River Orwell in the heart of Ipswich. This delightful,



Fence under construction at the Old Cattle Yard

hidden open space is a fascinating destination along the river path, but has been blighted by anti-social behaviour for several years. Our enhancement works (worth £45,000) will include a substantial opening up of the site to reduce the perception of it being unsafe; replacement of seats; repairs and replacement of fencing; path clearing; re-painting of fencing; reprinting and refurbishment of information boards;

and the installation of a CCTV camera to discourage anti-social behaviour.

Again, much of the work has already been completed by our volunteers and contractors – and the remainder will also be complete by the end of March 2025.

Staff volunteer groups from Suffolk County Council have helped with some

of the work and hopefully, as many are based nearby at Endeavour House, they will help keep an eye on the site and encourage others to use it – ideal for a lunchtime stroll or to sit and eat a sandwich!

CLlr Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, said: "It is fantastic to see the progress already being made with these projects as a result of funding committed by Suffolk County Council. There are now 13 projects underway with some fantastic organisations, all working collaboratively for the benefit of Ipswich residents."

New Stag Beetle shaped woodland for Ipswich

The Greenways Project is planting a new woodland this winter, in Bourne Park. The new woodland, made up of 2500 trees and shrubs, will be shaped to look like a stag beetle from above – so future aerial photos will show it!

After the success of our stag beetle shaped stag beetle habitat pile last year, this new project has been funded by a corporate sponsor via Trees For Cities. Ipswich is established as a 'Tree City of the World' to recognise the Borough Council's efforts to manage its existing



An artist's impression of the stag beetle woodland after about 10 years' growth. Base image courtesy of Google Maps (Imagery ©2024 Airbus, Maxar Technologies, map data ©2024)



A noticeable increase in deer numbers especially muntjac

tree stock as well as planting more and encouraging an overall increase in canopy cover across the town. This latest project will allow a wide range of local people the opportunity to be involved in the planting and subsequent care of the new trees. Some of the trees are being moved from within the park where 'nature' has planted trees in areas of grassland (where they are invasive and adversely affect the habitat), and the others are from a local nursery, grown from local UK sourced seed, to help reduce the risk of importing tree diseases and to reduce the environmental impact of the scheme.

The first planting was carried out during National Tree Week at the end of November, and the remainder will be planted in Ipswich Loves Trees week – 8th to the 16th February 2025 – when there will be a series of planting events for anyone to join in. Greenways volunteers and Ipswich's own Tree Wardens will be involved with both the planting and aftercare – including mulching, weeding, watering and mowing between the rows of trees until they are safely established. Rabbit fencing surrounds the main 'body' of the woodland, so that we don't have to use plastic tree guards to protect the young trees and shrubs from grazing.

The end of each 'leg' will have a stag beetle log habitat pile to make sure the woodland provides for these wonderful insects from day one!

The new woodland will provide much needed habitat diversity within the park and the inclusion of a large proportion of hazel will hopefully provide habitat for hazel dormice in the fullness of time. Recent dormouse footprint tunnel surveys in a 12 year old woodland in

the park revealed the presence of dormice, much to our surprise – so hopefully the new woodland will prove valuable in many ways.

The dormice of Belstead Brook Park

Hazel dormice – a European Protected Species – was first 're-discovered' in Millennium Wood in 2010, and since then, properly licenced volunteers

led by Margaret Regnault, have been monitoring the population as part of the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme – feeding back our results to help inform the national picture of dormouse conservation.

... dormice are heavily protected and disturbing them is a criminal offence.

Nationally between 2000 and 2022, there has been a 70% decline in numbers, which is startling and very disappointing given the importance of

this species as an indicator for overall health of broadleaved woodland. Locally however, our data is only available from 2011 to the present, but the last 5 or 6 years have shown a worrying reduction in numbers recorded during the surveys.

As with all wildlife species, there are numerous factors that can influence numbers and breeding success, but we are reasonably certain that human (and dog) disturbance has played a significant part in the decline in dormice in Belstead Brook Park, along with the very noticeable increase in deer numbers, especially muntjac. Increased deer browsing has a dramatic impact on the structure of a woodland – opening up the lower layers close to the ground and thus greatly reducing cover and mobility of many species, including dormice.

We have installed some small test plots of temporary fencing to exclude deer and will be monitoring the effect on vegetation. If this proves, as we believe it will, that fencing reduces grazing and allows better regrowth of coppiced trees and regeneration from seed, we will seek funding to fence larger areas in an attempt to reverse the fortunes of the dormice – surely the cutest yet closest to extinction of local species. An important reminder – please do not interfere with nest boxes in nature reserves, dormice are heavily protected and disturbing them is a criminal offence.



Dormouse

© Margaret Regnault

The butterfly year 2024

Julian Dowding *Secretary, Butterfly Conservation Suffolk*

After the 2024 butterfly season, most of the 40 or so butterfly species that can be seen in their adult form in Suffolk are tucked up for winter as adults, eggs, larvae or pupae. One wonders which will be first to be seen in 2025. Red Admiral (a migrant but now thought to survive our increasingly mild winters) Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock are the main contenders.

So how has the 2024 season been overall? The complete Suffolk record has not been processed yet so these can only be my personal obs. It might be worth trying to describe sightings against the backdrop of weather conditions but I don't recall a proper summer! All I know is that we had a very wet spring. Met Office says we had over 150% of average monthly April rain, and in May, the warmest mean temperature on record. Hardly any semblance of spring normality and generally low numbers of butterflies. Ragwort went mad.

Holly Blue, Peacock and Brimstone did pretty well in spring, but Small Tortoiseshell had another poor year. Once incredibly common, now something of a rarity. The sharp decline noticed 17 years ago coincided with its fly parasite - *Sturmia bella* - doing well. Milder winters probably also negatively affect the butterfly's survivability. They are one of our species which spends winter tucked up in a tree hole or shed or log-pile, as an adult butterfly and may be affected by moulds and bacteria when in a torpid state. So, the poor Torts had a bad year. I saw three in 2024, two in spring (Landseer Park) and one in summer on Landguard Common. Conversely, I saw at least two female Brimstones egg laying on a buckthorn in our garden and elsewhere, average numbers. This is a result of positive intervention to try and help the species in Suffolk from 1998 onwards with the Brimstones & Buckthorn Project, a joint initiative by Suffolk Butterfly Conservation, Ipswich Wildlife Group, Ipswich Organic Gardeners and Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Rangers. Thanks again to all who created this remarkable legacy for Suffolk.

That same Landguard foray saw hundreds of Brown Argus, often just 20-30 metres from the sea. It was as if they had been blown in from Europe, but I think they simply had a very good year there, the larvae feeding on low growing *Erodium cicutarium* & *E. lebelii*. There were lots of Large Whites (one per minute) making an easterly 'return' migration from Landguard out to sea.

Small Heath did pretty well but Purple Emperor, average to poor (particularly in



Female Purple Emperor

Ipswich though Spring Wood was reliable for a sighting or two). The Suffolk flagship species Silver-studded Blue had a very good year at Piper's Vale (c 300), but less so elsewhere. Piper's has a growing colony, no doubt because of a dedicated IBC Rangers and enthusiastic volunteer team with continued provision of superb habitat. This colony didn't exist until a dozen or so years ago when eggs were accidentally deposited with heather strewings on newly created heathland. It's not just Small Torts that are suffering. Overall UK butterflies have generally experienced a dramatic decline since the 1970's, when paradoxically, Butterfly Conservation was in its infancy.

I issue a plea to Suffolk, please help all you can with planting larval and nectar species for our Suffolk butterflies and moths, joining conservation work parties, and sending your records to Suffolk Branch: www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk/sightings.html



Small Tortoiseshell



Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Membership Secretary
01379 643665
www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk
email: butterflies@sns.org.uk

Butterfly Conservation is dedicated to saving wild butterflies, moths and their habitats throughout the UK. All Butterfly Conservation members who live in Suffolk are automatically members of the branch and receive our newsletter, the Suffolk Argus, three times a year. The Suffolk branch is run by volunteers and we would be very pleased to hear from you if you would like to get involved.

© Julian Dowding

© Julian Dowding

Ever popular IWG events

Martin Cant Ipswich Wildlife Group



IWG at Christchurch Mansion 'Ask the expert'

On 31st October we were included with many other 'expert' groups in the Mansion. Lots of exhibits were on hand for children and their families who were encouraged to ask questions about all types of animals and insects. We had a large selection of wildlife homes for the children to make, with bug boxes being very popular as always. This popular event attracts several hundred people during the half term holiday.



IWG at Holywells Apple Day

On October 12th we supported the Friends of Holywells Park at their apple day in the orchard. This was a great day enjoyed by many families and visitors all looking forward to a good day out, which did not disappoint. The weather behaved and everyone who attended this annual event went home with a big smile. There was a great selection of various stalls and with the apple harvest being a good year, apple cakes, toffee apples and apple juice all went down very well.

IWG supporting Landseer Road Methodist church

We have been supporting the church during the summer where the Church committee have been trying to make the grounds more wildlife friendly. We did a session making bird

boxes, bug boxes and hedgehog homes with the Guides and followed this up by providing several pallets to help create a large insect hotel and compost bins. This initiative is hoped to grow and should make the area more insect/animal friendly.



Secretary Leila Matata
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Ipswich Wildlife Group is a registered charity, relying entirely on volunteers, that promotes interest in, and conservation of, wildlife and habitats in and around Ipswich.



IWG at Spooktacular

We joined Suffolk Wildlife Trust at Holywells Park for a spooky Halloween evening. Families were booked in for various delights including bat walks, insect trails and dissecting owl pellets amongst many other activities. Whilst the park was closed to the public, the cafe stayed open for the adults, which proved popular! This was a very successful evening with lots of excited children . . . and adults!

Green is the colour.....

Andy and Yvonne *Friends of Holywells Park*



In what was to become known as Holywells Park, Thomas Gainsbrough's 1759 iconic painting shows clearly the ponds that John Cobbold was to use the water from, for brewing beer. These ponds are the central feature of the park and are fed by natural springs.

The ponds are a magnet for wildlife but often, the flora is overlooked. Duckweed, that small aquatic plant that floats on the surface, often goes un-noticed. However, over the past couple of years it has made its presence felt and has taken over all the ponds in the park. There are six ponds in total and the canal is

also covered in a lush green carpet.

There are five species of duckweed, Common, Greater, Ivy leaf, Gibbous and Rootless. Normally the duckweed tends to clear in the winter months but over the last few years the lush carpet has increased. What effect does this have on the pond ecosystem and the wildlife that relies on it? Duckweed is a source of food for fish and other wildlife. However, it can have a detrimental effect on the oxygen levels in the water so can be life threatening to fish.

What is causing the

duckweed to remain? Is it that our winters are becoming increasingly milder, changes in the water flow or other unknown factors? Could it be increased levels of nutrients finding their way into the water? Whatever the cause, it appears that the increased amount of duckweed is the new 'norm' for Holywells Park.

As ever, the Friends' Wednesday volunteer group has been busy in the Orchard. It seems that, whatever the season, there is always plenty to keep us occupied. Once the old year is out, we'll be looking forward to our annual pruning of the Apple trees.



Friends of Holywells Park

The Group aims to work in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council to improve and promote the Park.
Contact: fohipswich@gmail.com
www.holywellspark.org.uk
[facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich](https://www.facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich)

We undertake this task in February...at this point in the year, we know that Spring is just around the corner.



A diverse woodland habitat

Sam Chamberlin *Friends of the Dales*



Friends of the Dales

The Dales is a small Local Nature Reserve situated off Dales Road in Ipswich.

For details of the Friends Group find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales.



The Waved Black (Parascotia fuliginaria)

The diverse woodland habitat at The Dales deserves a special mention for supporting many species.

One of the key components of this habitat is the amount of standing and fallen dead wood. The wealth of degenerate timber is a declining feature in the modern world, but it offers critical lifecycle

opportunities for iconic Suffolk species such as Stag Beetle and the notable Tanner Beetle, a wealth of fungi also exists.

A fascinating bracket fungus which is prominent in the woodland, annually, is the Birch Polypore (*Fomitopsis betulina*). A brown rot fungus that breaks cellulose in wood causing the timber

to become brittle, it's an excellent habitat for a host of species such as invertebrates.

Specialist moth species will utilise this polypore as a larval food source, this being the Waved Black (*Parascotia fuliginaria*), larval observations have been recorded in association with the fungi. The Waved Black is very local in Suffolk,

records prominent from the coast with additional migrant individuals. I have been lucky to record the species in Ipswich and it would be interesting to know if this species was breeding at the site, which is a very strong possibility.

Please come along and join us at 10am on the second Thursday of the month.



Tanner beetle



Birch Polypore (Fomitopsis betulina) fungus



The Dales - a special place

Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold

Caroline Markham *GeoSuffolk*



The Blue Plaque on the Holywells Park Stable Block

In November 2024, the Ipswich Society unveiled a Blue Plaque on the Stable Block at Holywells Park. It reads "Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold (1766 – 1824), Georgian scientist and pioneering palaeontologist who lived and discovered new species at Holywells".

Elizabeth Cobbold collected and identified fossil molluscs from Suffolk Crag deposits (for the most part from what is now known as Red Crag), mostly from the land belonging to the Cobbold family – in what are now Holywells and Landseer parks. Her specimens were first published by James Sowerby of London in his *Mineral Conchology* from 1813. This is more than 200 years ago, eight years before the first paper on Mary Anning's specimens was published by the Geological Society of London and 46 years before Charles Darwin's "*On the Origin of Species*" was published.

Such early scientific endeavour deserves to be recorded and celebrated. Indeed, Sowerby named a fossil bivalve *Nucula cobboldiae* after her, "Being desirous of commemorating Mrs Cobbold, whose copious collection obtained with great industry..... I have named this rare, and wital elegant shell after her".



Nucula cobboldiae (this has recently been renamed *Acila cobboldiae*).

Thank you to the Ipswich Society for erecting the blue plaque, a 21st century commemoration on the 200th anniversary of her death. She laid intellectual foundations for the palaeontology collection at Ipswich Museum which was designated of national/international importance by the Arts Council in 2023.

Possible sites

If you walk up the valley at Holywells, towards Nacton Road, you will come to a viewing point at the stream where springs of clear water can be seen bubbling up in



The springs at Holywells Park CGS, 2021

Wild Ipswich

All the conservation organisations working together to inspire local people to help wildlife throughout the town and beyond.

www.wildipswich.org

the stream bed. The water is issuing from the Red Crag and often contains finely comminuted pieces of fossil shell from the Crag. GeoSuffolk has designated this area a County Geodiversity Site and it may be that Elizabeth Cobbold collected fossils from here, though it has not yielded complete specimens in recent times. Landseer Park is a more likely location for her finds – the old spring at Beggar's Hollow brought fine Red Crag fossil mollusc specimens to the surface up until the 1970s when it was culverted.



Probable location of Beggar's Hollow in Landseer Park, 2023. This is close to the northern boundary of the park, about 250 metres from Clapgate Lane



Members of the Ipswich Geological Group collecting fossils at the spring at Beggar's Hollow in 1968

Cutting back wayward vegetation

Ann Havard *Friends of Belstead Brook Park*

After a warm and wet summer the vegetation in our gardens and Local Nature Reserves has exploded!



Friends of Belstead Brook Park

www.wildipswich.org

Email: fobbp@wildipswich.org

Friends of Belstead Brook Park (FoBBP) was set up in 2002 to help look after the 250 acres of informal country park on the south-western fringe of Ipswich. The group runs practical work parties, helps raise funds for improvements and acts as 'eyes and ears', passing information back to the Greenways Project.

This has meant that our work parties have inevitably concentrated on cutting back wayward vegetation and keeping the paths passable. In July and October we attacked Stoke Park Wood doing just that. In this LNR we normally get a lot

of rubbish but have been pleasantly surprised on these two occasions, although we did have to remove an entire baby cot that someone thought it was appropriate to leave in the wood!

Before we start each work party, James Baker (Greenways Project) gives us a health and safety and tools talk. One of the recurring items he always mentions is 'be careful of dog poo'. So it was with some hilarity that he told us that at our August work party we would be working by the 'Poo pipe'.

If you've ever walked from the Bobbits Lane car park into Ashground Plantation you will know where I mean. To explain: there is a sewerage treatment works at the end of Bobbits Lane which brings the sewage from the houses in Stoke Park to be treated. It's a big, green pipe which crosses that path and walking alongside it has become an unofficial path from Stoke



The Ashground Plantation 'Poo pipe'

Park Drive into Ashground Plantation. Our work in August was to do some preparatory work to make this path easier for people to walk along. We widened the path, removing big bits of concrete and bricks, clearing away lots of vegetation and roots. The slope where the path joins Stoke Park Drive will also be made more manageable.

Great excitement in September as when we arrived to work in Belstead Meadow, near Cottingham Road, we saw the big, red, new(ish) tractor that the Greenways Project now has. It has a grass cutting attachment which makes short work of cutting through rough meadow grass. Unfortunately it was still us humans that had to cut and clear small inaccessible areas.

Finally some cold weather in November for the first Mega bash of the year. We had 10 people coppicing, dead hedging, sorting products into bean poles, pea sticks and stakes. It's always a pleasure to work in Spring Wood which as James told us is designated as an Ancient Wood. This means there has been a wood on the site since the 1600s. Before this date the planting of woodland was uncommon so a wood present in 1600 probably developed naturally and quite likely to have been there since the Ice Age – a sobering thought.

It's a privilege to be carrying on the traditional tasks here and know that in the spring the bluebells will reward our work with a magical haze of blue.



Autumn fungi of Spring Wood

Busy time for volunteers

Stephen Corley *Chairman Portal Woodlands Conservation Group*



© S. Corley

Stunning autumn colours in Portals Woodland

Autumn, that time of year when fungi usually give their best displays, was busy for our volunteers.

The main job was to clear saplings and bramble off the southern Bronze Age burial mound (tumulus). These had grown rampantly since lockdown spoiling the progress we had made with the mound's conservation – it's

somewhat frustrating that trees thrive where they want, not always where we plant them!

Elsewhere in the woodland, the volunteers cleared up several fallen trees and overhanging branches, dismantled dens built during the school break, and cleared around the pond, which had become completely

overgrown during the summer.

Well done and thank you to James Forbes for building a log pile habitat for stag beetles (*Lucanus cervus*) as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award.

Wishing all our volunteers, supporters and visitors a very happy and healthy 2025!



© S. Corley

Volunteers clearing bracken around the southern tumulus



Portal Woodlands Conservation Group

Enquiries: Martlesham Parish Council 01473 612632 pwcg.onesuffolk.net or email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com

The PORTAL WOODLANDS CONSERVATION GROUP is dedicated to conserving the woodlands west of the Suffolk Police HQ and alongside the A1214 encouraging the local wildlife to thrive while preserving historical sites of interest and inspiring people to enjoy the nature surrounding them. Volunteers meet each month to work on a variety of projects and everybody is welcome to join this friendly group. All required training and necessary tools are provided.

Volunteer Work Mornings
(all ages welcome - no need to book)
Meet at the Education Area
from 10.00am – Noon.

Saturday 18th January
Sunday 16th February
Saturday 15th March
Sunday 27th April

For more details of the Group's events, and to check for date changes, please go to:
pwcg.onesuffolk.net or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.



© D. Sweeting

Male stag beetle in all his glory



© S. Corley

The log pile habitat that James built

Our ponds, marshes and rivers are alive with waterfowl

John Kornjaca *Suffolk Bird Group*

At the time of writing, the first snows of winter have arrived in parts of the UK while here in Suffolk, temperatures have fallen to 5 or 6 degrees centigrade. The Autumn migration period is over – although a group of late Barn Swallows were seen in Dunwich in mid-November and a spectacular Hoopoe was seen on the beach at Sizewell.

seemingly awaiting the warmer weather.

The drake Gadwall, from a distance looks ash grey with a black patch to the rear. However, upon closer inspection he has subtle black vermiculations and a lovely matching blackish bill. Like other dabbling ducks such as the Mallard and Shoveler, Gadwall gather in large groups as males try to gain the attention of a female.

Shoveler have distinctive, large spatula shaped bills but worth noting their bottle green heads and smart chestnut flanks on white breast plumage. If fortunate you may see a gorgeous bright yellow eye.

Wigeon are winter visitors and aside of their whistling call, the males are quite distinctive with their chestnut heads sporting a yellow crown stripe. They gather in large flocks through our winter and spring.

Less frequently seen, the male Pintail is another stunner, possessing a rich chocolate brown head and contrasting white and pale grey plumage. Watch out for long, thin tail feathers - the feature from which the bird gets its name.

The drake Pochard is a diving duck and is also stunning with his two-tone bill,



Male wigeon

reddish-chestnut head and black breast. The drakes have bright red eyes. Watch for Pochard in areas with deeper water.

Tufted Duck is another diving duck - they are jet black in colour with snow white flanks and, as well as a tuft to the back of the head, they

or thirty Long-tailed Tits, Blue Tits, Great Tits and Coal Tits scouring the trees for food. It is always worth checking out such groups for 'guests' such as Goldcrest, Treecreeper and Marsh Tit. Very occasionally within such a flock you may find the much rarer Firecrest, perhaps a Chiffchaff or even a Blackcap.



Male pintail

have bright yellow eyes. The early part of the year is a wonderful time to watch our ducks since many will start to disperse by the end of January and in to February searching out suitable nest sites as the breeding season gets underway. It is not unusual to see the first Mallard ducklings in March/early April.

In parks and woodland, if fortunate, you may see or hear large feeding parties of *titmice*. They are quite a sight with (perhaps) twenty

Fieldfares and Redwing flocks are passing through the county – among them visiting Song Thrushes, Blackbirds and Robins that add to our resident populations in winter.

Meanwhile, as we optimistically look towards the spring, birders across the county are awaiting news of Bohemian Waxwings, Hawfinch, Short-eared Owls, Snow Buntings and Bramblings – just how many shall we see this coming winter?

Our ponds, marshes and rivers are alive with waterfowl with our ducks sporting new, crisp courtship and breeding plumage.

The male Mallard with his bright iridescent green head and contrasting bright yellow bill is a handsome fellow.

Through the winter, Mallard gather in quite large groups - the males trying to attract the attention of the females.

The smaller drake Teal is another spectacular bird, he sports a chestnut head with a contrasting green eye patch. Teal are often seen in exceptionally large flocks and can be seen roosting on the banks of ponds and marshes,



Male mallard

Suffolk Bird Group

Enquiries:
info@suffolkbirdgroup.org
www.suffolkbirdgroup.org
Twitter: [suffolkbirds1](https://twitter.com/suffolkbirds1)

SBG is the Group for people interested in the birds of Suffolk, providing a network and a voice for birdwatchers in the county.

Christchurch Park Bird Sightings, July to October 2024

Philip Murphy *Friends of Christchurch Park*

July

There had been no reported sightings of a Kingfisher at the park for at least seven years, so one seen at Wilderness Pond was of particular interest.

Mandarin Ducks on Wilderness Pond peaked at 30. Totals of Mallards, also on Wilderness Pond, increased from 25 on 10th up to 55.

Three pairs of Moorhens produced only four juveniles on Wilderness Pond. On Round Pond, a pair with four chicks were still present in early August. The two pairs of Little Grebes remained on Wilderness Pond.

A juvenile Green Woodpecker in the Upper Arboretum was evidence that this species had bred somewhere within the vicinity of the park. A decline in sightings of Swifts from 28th probably indicated that the local breeding population had departed by that date.

Aside from the birds, at least four spectacular Jersey Tiger Moths were seen in the Upper Arboretum.

August

In what was generally a quiet month, the highlight was a Kingfisher at Wilderness Pond – perhaps the same bird as in July?

Mandarin Duck totals peaked at 24. The maximum count of Mallards was 50. On the Round Pond, the four Moorhen chicks remained there into September.

Canada Geese numbers decreased late in the month, especially early in the morning. Evidence suggests that they moved to Ipswich Docks to spend the night before some returned to Wilderness Pond mid-morning.

The initial decline of Swifts over the park had become apparent on July 28th and their departure accelerated rapidly in August – peak totals over the park were about 15.

September

There was an impressive arrival of passerine migrants in the first week of September. One of the species was Pied Flycatcher, located in a limetree within the avenue of trees leading north of the park's play area.

Perhaps even more unexpected than the flycatcher was of a Swallow and at least six House Martins swooping low over a grassed area, presumably in pursuit of insects. These species are more typically only seen in flight high over the park, and



© Joseph Hullis

Kingfisher seen on Wilderness Pond

in over 40 years of birdwatching at this site I have never before witnessed such behaviour.

Highlights on Wilderness Pond include 27 Mandarin Ducks, c70 Mallards, and a juvenile Little Grebe at the pond's northern end.

On Round Pond the four juvenile Moorhens remained to the month's end by which time they could fly.

Birds of note involved a typically-noisy Ring-necked Parakeet, the first grey Wagtail of the autumn, and a late Swift, a Skylark flying over, and the first Redwings of the autumn. At least five Chiffchaffs were noted.

Common Buzzards totalled four on 15th and three on 28th. Single Sparrowhawks were present on 8th and 17th.

October

This month is renowned for migration. Sightings include eight Grey Heron c100 Redwings c50 Jackdaws c450 Wood Pigeons and c30 Fieldfares.

Mandarin duck totals vary between 15 and 29, and a pair were observed copulating on 26th. 47 Mallards on Round Pond. Four Little Grebes remained on Wilderness Pond.

A Raven which flew southwards on 12th joined a second Raven on the Spire of St Mary-le-Tower church where they were harassed by crows before flying off northwards.

A Kestrel was seen over the park on 17th. Two Sparrowhawks, included a food-begging juvenile.

The logo for Friends of Christchurch Park features a stylized green landscape with trees and buildings, with the text 'FRIENDS OF CHRISTCHURCH PARK' in white. Below the logo, the text reads: 'Friends of Christchurch Park', 'Chair: Peter Gray 07709 634161', 'Membership Secretary: Robert Fairchild 01473 254255', 'www.friendsofchristchurchpark.co.uk', 'Follow us on Facebook@ChristchurchPark and Twitter@ChristchurchPk'. At the bottom, a paragraph states: 'The sole purpose of the Friends Group is to help look after the Park for the public good, and to promote its welfare. Anyone who shares this aim is welcome to join. For a small annual fee of £10 you can join in Friends activities all year round, including Illustrated talks and discussions, Guided Park walks and Practical conservation work. You will also receive an informal seasonal newsletter.'

The above-average temperatures were presumably responsible for there being a Red-necked terrapin out of the water on the fallen tree trunk at wilderness pond.

With many thanks to Mark Dowling, Tony Powell and in particular, Brian Macdonald for their contributions to this article.



Grey Heron

Life in the Amazon Basin

David Dowding *Wildlife Ranger, Ipswich Borough Council*



Drought resistant flowers flourishing on the SUDS's shallow, sun-baked soil.



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wildlife Rangers

Office : 01473 433998

park.rangers@ipswich.gov.uk

Stable Block, Holywells Park,

Cliff Lane, Ipswich IP3 0PG

The Wildlife & Education Rangers are responsible for the management of wildlife areas within the town's parks and other green spaces. As well as carrying out practical management, the team runs an events programme and works with many local schools to engage and inspire the public about the wildlife Ipswich has to offer.

The Old Sugar beet site at Sproughton has recently been developed into an enterprise park with large buildings such as La Doria and Amazon taking up a fair portion of the site. As part of the planning conditions, a large area of green space has been left towards the south of the site along the river Gipping corridor, to provide continuity of habitat for riparian species.

This 'green belt' consists of larger drainage basins (SUDS), swales (sloped verges) and shorter lawns, some of which have been seeded with wildflowers, others have been left to colonise naturally. These all connect from a drainage point of view, as they ultimately flow into the Gipping and as a result, provide good connectivity within the development.

Because public access is limited there are some good waterfowl and waders present in the larger basins including Shelduck, Lapwing, Snipe and Green Sandpipers.

Ducks and geese are known vectors of aquatic plants and invertebrates, even fish as the eggs get tangled on their feet. We have not seen fish yet, but the site is now full of smooth newts which gave the groundworkers a scare when they uncovered a few under their slabs!

Some of the dry flowery areas are good for invertebrates including Green Bush Cricket, Brown Argus and Common

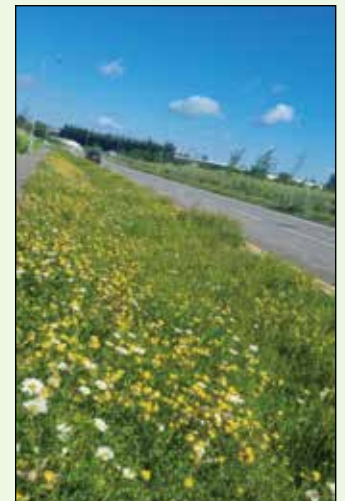


Flowering lawn in the slightly more formal areas, cut every eight weeks allows low growing species or dwarf versions (i.e Bugloss) to flower.

Blue butterflies and large garden Bumblebee and within the wetter areas, a dozen species of Dragon and Damselflies reside.

Otter, Kingfisher, Badger, Harvest mouse and Water shrew have all been found taking advantage of these larger basins in close proximity to the river. When cutting the narrow swales along the more urban road sections we have uncovered lots of amphibians and during December we were amazed to find a gingery Harvest mouse, which shows that even the narrowest of corridors can work for target

species if managed with a more sensitive cutting regime.



Swale (mowed bi-annually)



Sustainable Urban Drainage system close to the river, with Amazon warehouse in the background.

A film premier and a visitor from the East

Tim Kenny *Leader, RSPB Ipswich Group*



Amur Stonechat (Saxicola stejnegeri), Trimley Marshes 09.11.2024.

I will start with a reminder that my tenure as the local Group Leader will end in April 2025 after eight years, during which we've had a global pandemic and seen many of our neighbouring groups close due to declining membership. The fact that the Ipswich group survives whereas those in Lowestoft, Norwich and Colchester (amongst others) haven't, stands as possibly my proudest achievement in the role!

We're still looking for a replacement Group Leader for this important position. If you think this is something you could do, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please feel free to contact the group via email at ipswichrspliblocalgroup@yahoo.com. You have until the AGM in early April 2025 to express your interest.

Lately, I've been spending a lot of time working on a film that, by the time you read this, will have premiered at our group's Christmas social event. "A Winter Walk along the River Orwell", whilst concentrating on the wildlife to be found along our local river, also looks at the history of the estuary and its place within the wider local history of the area. It will also be shown on Tuesday 18th February at the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Felixstowe branch, after which (sometime in March) I will be putting it on YouTube for everyone to enjoy. Typically, too late for inclusion

in the film, a rarity turned up at Trimley Marshes, although I did include it as an epilogue to the main feature.

I am amazed whenever a bird arrives from far-distant shores that such a small creature can survive being blown off-course by thousands of miles, but clearly they do, as the Suffolk bird records show!

The Amur Stonechat (*Saxicola stejnegeri*) breeds in eastern Russia, Korea, China and Japan, wintering in southern China and Indochina. I picked a place somewhere completely at random – Vladivostok – and Googled just how long it takes to get to Trimley Marshes. The answer? To cover the 7,503 miles (12,075 kilometres) by road requires 149 driving hours – 6.2 days – admittedly not in a completely straight line. And yet a tiny Amur Stonechat has made that journey (very likely with considerable wind assistance) to delight many local birders, including myself. There aren't many rarities that are within walking distance from my house, so I took a few hours out of my filming schedule to see it. Paler than our familiar Stonechat, the Amur shares with its relatives the photogenic habit of perching on the very tops of bushes, a consequence of which is a very comprehensive photographic record of its stay.

So here we are, hurtling headlong into



Ipswich Local Group

Group Leader Tim Kenny

Tel 01394 809236

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<https://group.rspb.org.uk/ipswich>

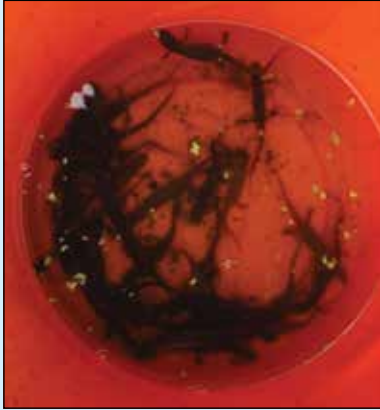
Ipswich RSPB Local Group is for everyone interested in birds and other wildlife in the Ipswich area and beyond. Come along to our indoor talks, held monthly between September to April at Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, get out and experience nature first hand on one of our regular field meetings. Three times a year you will receive the 'Orwell Observer' magazine. Membership costs £5 per year (£1 for Juniors). For more information see the Events Diary in this magazine, visit our website or email as per details above.

2025, which I very much hope is not the series finale to the human race! We have a series of field trips coming up, details of which you can find in the diary section of this august publication. I always enjoy Manningtree and Mistley to get the year list off to a good start (attractive FA Cup draw for Ipswich Town permitting!). There are trips to Boyton, Hollesley and Levington, as well as Stephen's interesting selection of midweek walks for those of you fortunate enough not to have to work on a Tuesday. We hope to see you soon at one of our events.

Snippets

Numerous newts *Mel Eke*

During a regular inspection of the beloved baby frogs in my prized garden pond, I spotted a couple of newts. Curious to know how many there might be lurking there I started my stealthy catching of the predators with a small net. Having perfected the technique, the first evening produced 12 which was a good catch BUT the following day, another 23 in the morning, 18 in the evening, finishing off the next day with another 21 totalling 74!! Is this a record for smooth newts in a small garden pond?



Motherly Mandarin *Richard Stewart*

Christchurch Park has many ancient oak trees and is one of the best places in Suffolk to see Mandarin ducks. The two came together recently when my wife and I saw a Mandarin duck acting as if injured to lure a dog away from a nearby oak tree. We realised why this was happening as Mandarins nest in tree holes so that their young have to jump down to the ground once fledged. This tree had long grass around the base and it seemed obvious that one or more young were there. Once I had explained this to the dog owners they quickly brought it under control and we all headed away from the area.



At home with the foxes

Dave & Linnie Ratcliffe

Not everyone is happy with foxes close to their home - but we are. For over ten years now we have played host to families of foxes in our garden in suburban Ipswich. We first became aware of their presence in the neighbourhood by the earth movements under the compost heap at the end of the garden. This became a considerable hole and obviously a potential family home. Over the years we have become used to sharing the garden with playful cubs and dozing adults and they have never caused us a problem and take very little notice as we go about gardening and hanging out the washing- unlike the Muntjac deer that has also become a frequent visitor and eats everything that grows!



Who's been eating the dormouse boxes? *Martin Cant*

During the annual survey of Dormouse nest boxes in Spring Wood, several were found severely chewed. This is most unusual and the quest is on to identify the culprit(s). Prime suspects are squirrels but why? One theory is that these particular boxes were made from marine plywood by the Ipswich Wildlife Group 'Wildlife Homes' work party and maybe the glue used is the attraction. In future, oak or pine will be used hoping that will provide the solution.



Events Diary

JANUARY

Sunday 5th January 8.30am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT
Levington and Trimley. Meet at Levington Marina. Park along the approach road. (Long walk possible). Map Ref: TM246382. Post Code: IP10 0LN
What3Words: formation.submerged.
zipped. **Leader: Dave Pearsons Tel. 07913 620665.**

Thursday 9th January 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
"Puffins Galore – Birds of Skokholm Island" Simon Hooton, retired Suffolk Wildlife Trust Conservation Officer. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, age 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Saturday 11th January 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD TRIP
Manningtree and Mistley for waders and wildfowl. Meet at the Walls Manningtree CO11 11HQ TM109319. **Led by Stephen Marginson 01473 258791.**

Saturday 18th January 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH Martlesham Common.
Join Greenways and others for a day of heathland scrub clearing on this lovely Local Nature Reserve. May include a bonfire, wind direction permitting. Meet in the Community Centre car park off Felixstowe Road, Martlesham. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Sunday 19th January 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY
Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Wednesday 22nd January 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Costa Rica Explored. Join us for an illustrated talk from Ian Barthorpe who works at RSPB Minsmere. Venue: Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF. Entry £3 includes tea or coffee. There is easy access and the hall has a hearing loop system.

Tuesday 28th January 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Christchurch Park for winter birds. Meet Soane Street Entrance IP4 2BE TM165448.

Thursday 30th January 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK
'Birding in Costa Rica', Howard Vaughan. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission £3, non-members most welcome, full-time students free. **Additional information: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459. Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

FEBRUARY

Saturday 8th February 10am to 1pm Greenways Project and IBC TREE PLANTING Join the Friends of Belstead Brook Park, Tree Wardens and others to help plant the new stag beetle-shaped woodland in Bourne Park. Meet in the large car park off Stoke Park Drive. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Sunday 9th February 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD TRIP
RSPB Hollesley Marsh and surrounding area for winter wildfowl. Meet at car park. **Led by Tim Kenny 07887 770942.**

Thursday 13th February 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
"Lowestoft Kittiwakes" with Dick Houghton, leading authority on local gulls. Sponsored by Collins Waste Solutions. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, age 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Saturday 15th February 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH Martlesham Heath SSSI Join Greenways and Martlesham Conservation Group for a day of heathland scrub clearing on this vitally important site. Hopefully including a bonfire. Meet on site near the bonfire in the middle of the reserve. Follow the track in from the windsock on Eagle Way, parking considerately in local streets. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Sunday 16th February 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY
Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Saturday 22nd February 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT
Tollesbury Wick. Meet at Woodrolfe Road car park. Map Ref: TL963106. Post Code: CM9 8RY What3Words: thin.elects.diver. **Leader: Ashley Gooding Tel. 07808 044611.**

Tuesday 25th February 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Bourne Park and Bourne Bridge area for winter birds. Meet at Stoke Park Drive Car Park. IP2 8LT. TM152419.

Wednesday 26th February 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Historical Ecology. Join us for an illustrated talk from wildlife expert, Adrian Knowles. Venue: Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF. Entry £3 includes tea or coffee. There is easy access and the hall has a hearing loop system.

Thursday 27th February 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Followed by trophy presentations, SBG Review of the Year, a raffle and Mystery Bird Quiz! Please bring any unwanted bird books/magazines to exchange or donate for Save Our Suffolk Swifts. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Free admission. **Additional information: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459. Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

MARCH

Thursday 13th March 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
"Wild about Suffolk" – Paul Taylor, who manages his Suffolk farm with wildlife in mind. Sponsored by The Oddfellows. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, age 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Sunday 16th March 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY
Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Sunday 16th March 8am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT
Breckland. Meet at Santon Downham car park. Map Ref: TL815878. Post Code: IP27 0TJ What3Words: caused.wiped.secretly. **Leader: Gi Grieco Tel. 07951 482547.**

Saturday 22nd March 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD TRIP
RSPB Boyton for spring birds. Meet at Banters Farm, Boyton, TM387475. **Led by Stephen Marginson 01473 258791.**

Tuesday 25th March 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Spring Wood and Thorington Hall for winter birds and spring flowers. Meet Marbled White Drive IP8 3TL TM 143417.

Wednesday 26th March 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Thirty Years of Garden Bird Watch. Join us for an illustrated talk from Rob Jacques of the British Trust for Ornithology. Venue: Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF. Entry £3 includes tea or coffee. There is easy access and the hall has a hearing loop system.

Thursday 27th March 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK
'A Learner Birder Visits Donana and Extremadura', Anne Wright. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission £3, non-members most welcome, full-time students free. **Additional information: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459. Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

APRIL

Sunday 6th April 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD TRIP

Levington for late winter/early spring birds. Meet at the marina. Note: park on approach road, not inside marina barriers. 3 - 4 hours, 3 miles. **Led by Tim Kenny 07887 770942.**

Thursday 10th April 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING

AGM followed by "Mid Yare Reserves - wildlife of Strumpshaw Fen and Buckenham Marshes". Drew Lyness, British Trust for Ornithology. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Saturday 12th April 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Shingle Street and The Sandlings. Meet at Coastguard Cottages car park. Map Ref: TM369431. Post Code: IP12 3BG
What3Words: apes.term.pays.
Leader: Steve Fryett Tel. 07593 382082.

Sunday 20th April 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Tuesday 22nd April 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Bramford Open Space and Water Meadows for summer birds. Meet at the car park, IP8 4AN TM126465.

Wednesday 23rd April 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

Conserving butterflies on Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserves. Join us for an illustrated talk from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Steve Aylward. Venue: Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF. Entry £3 includes tea or coffee. There is easy access and the hall has a hearing loop system.

Thursday 24th April 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK

Two Short Talks: 'Save Our Suffolk Swifts' And 'Birdtrack Update' Eddie Bathgate and Adam Faiers. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission £3, non-members most welcome, full-time students free. **Additional information: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459. Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

Saturday 26th April 9.15am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Fingringhoe Wick. Meet at visitor centre car park, South Green Road. Map Ref: TM048192. Post Code: CO5 7DN
What3Words: novelist.modem.kilts.
Leader: Ashley Gooding Tel. 07808 044611.

Tuesday 29th April 6.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD TRIP

Kiln Meadow for nightingale and warblers. Meet Marbled White Drive IP8 3TL, TM 143417. **Led by Stephen Marginson 01473 258791.**

Regular Events

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 1pm SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Join Ipswich Wildlife Group for a morning of work in the wood. Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Parking in Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

TUESDAYS 9.30am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

The Project's largest weekly work party - carrying out a wide range of practical tasks across the 50 or so sites that we manage. For all Greenways work parties, volunteers need to be registered via a short informal induction prior to joining us - please contact us for further details. Work party runs from 10am to about 4pm. **Contact greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk or call 07736 826076**

WEDNESDAYS 10am Friends of Holywells Park HOLYWELLS PARK WORK PARTY

Join our small team of volunteers doing valuable work around the Park. **Contact Andy Smuk for details 01473 728907**

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7.30pm - 9pm Ipswich Friends of the Earth MEETING - for venue please phone 07931 585672 or see Facebook page www.facebook.com/ipswichFOE/

SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY

Meet by the notice board at the lower entrance on Dales Road.

THURSDAYS 9.30am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

A smaller group than on Tuesday, but operates in the same way - please see details above for Tuesdays Work Party

THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7 - 8pm 'Green Drinks' Dove Inn, Ipswich DRINKS AND CHAT

Join us at the Dove Inn for a drink, a chat and a bit of networking with other environmentally-minded people. Look out for the 'Green Drinks' sign on the table. All welcome

FRIDAYS 9.30am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

Another opportunity to work on the 50 or so sites managed by the Project - please see the details above for Tuesdays Work Party

EVERY FRIDAY 9.30am Ipswich Wildlife Group/Greenways BOX KIT MAKING

Come and join in making the kits for bird, hedgehog and insect habitat boxes for our Wildlife Homes project. Only the most rudimentary of woodworking skills needed. Thorington Hall Barn, Bobbits Lane, Ipswich. **More information from Martin Cant 07858 436003 martin.cant@ntlworld.com**

FRIDAYS 10am-11.30am Suffolk Wildlife Trust WILD TOTS

Wild play activities for ages 18 months - 5 years old in Holywells Park. **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group RIVER WORK PARTY

A joint work party with the River Action Group along Alderman Canal and the River Gipping, maintaining footpaths and making these splendid waterways areas to be proud of. Usually meeting at Bibb Way alongside Alderman Road recreation ground, but please get in touch to confirm location **More information from James Baker 07736 826076**

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Butterfly Conservation WORK PARTY (October to March). More information from Helen Saunders helens919@gmail.com

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am-12pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust WEEKEND WILDLIFE CLUB

For 6 - 11 years olds. Meet new friends, get outdoors and earn awards. Join us in the beautiful, historic Holywells Park. Each month has a different wild theme. **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

SECOND SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH 10am - 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

Come and join us for a morning working in the fresh air. **For further details visit our website: wildipswich.org/fobbp or email fobbp@wildipswich.org**

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 12:30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust NATURE CHAMPIONS: YOUNG WARDENS

For 11-16 year olds in Holywells Park. Looking for practical experience, whilst making friends? If so, Young Wardens is the group for you! **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 11am-1pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust ECO ACTIONISTS

Location varies. A meet-up and creative session for 18-25 year-old eco actionists. **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

MOST SATURDAYS 10.30am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group Northgate Allotments WOODCRAFT & WILDLIFE

Get involved in coppicing and woodland skills at the Wildlife area. **Call Geoff Sinclair to confirm dates 07860 595376**

Spring Wood Day 2026

A reminder that Spring Wood Day now takes place every other year - next date will be Monday 4th May 2026.