

Mud glorious mud  
- see page 7

# Local Wildlife news

May to August 2024

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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If your friends and colleagues don't have a copy let them know that the latest issue along with all back issues are always free to view at the Wild Ipswich website. The site is the gateway to all the wildlife and conservation organisations in the local area where you will be directed to their website, Twitter (X), or Facebook pages.

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).



## Come and Join us

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 [iwg@wildipswich.org](mailto:iwg@wildipswich.org)

# Welcome

by **James Baker** *Editor*

Welcome to the spring and summer edition of Local Wildlife News – as usual, full of relevant local articles and events for the summer. Hopefully there will be some drier weather ahead, after one of the wettest times in living memory (as mentioned in many articles in this issue!).

Once again, this edition has been beautifully crafted by the wonderful Colin Hullis!

For many years Colin has produced a fabulous magazine for us all to enjoy, three times per year – entirely as a volunteer. It is no mean feat, believe me! Planning the pages, chasing contributors for articles and photographs (and often going out to take relevant photos if needed!), checking the articles and adjusting them to fit the space available, liaising with the designer and printer, editing, and finally, managing the distribution to Suffolk Wildlife Trust and round the town's

libraries etc – amazing! As a contributor, I am in awe – as I know I am often the last to respond, don't have good pictures, and type badly! As the editor, I am always astonished by what a wonderful draft is sent over, every issue.

I hope you will therefore all join me in saying a big thank you to Colin for his unstinting efforts – and honour this effort by enjoying the magazine and all the inspiring content and by trying to take part in at least some of the host of varied events on offer from the thriving local conservation scene!



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# Gardening in a new way in 2024

**Wendy Brown** *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

There comes a time when a garden, that was large enough for family badminton is too much for a single person to enjoy or work in.

However, if you love being outside, find gardening completely absorbing, enjoy looking after and producing plants then there have to be other ways of fulfilling this challenge. In my garden I was proud to have something in flower on every day of the year that supplied interest and decoration for the house and a useful supply of vegetables, herbs and fruit.



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## Ipswich Group Newsletter

Chairman: (Vacant)

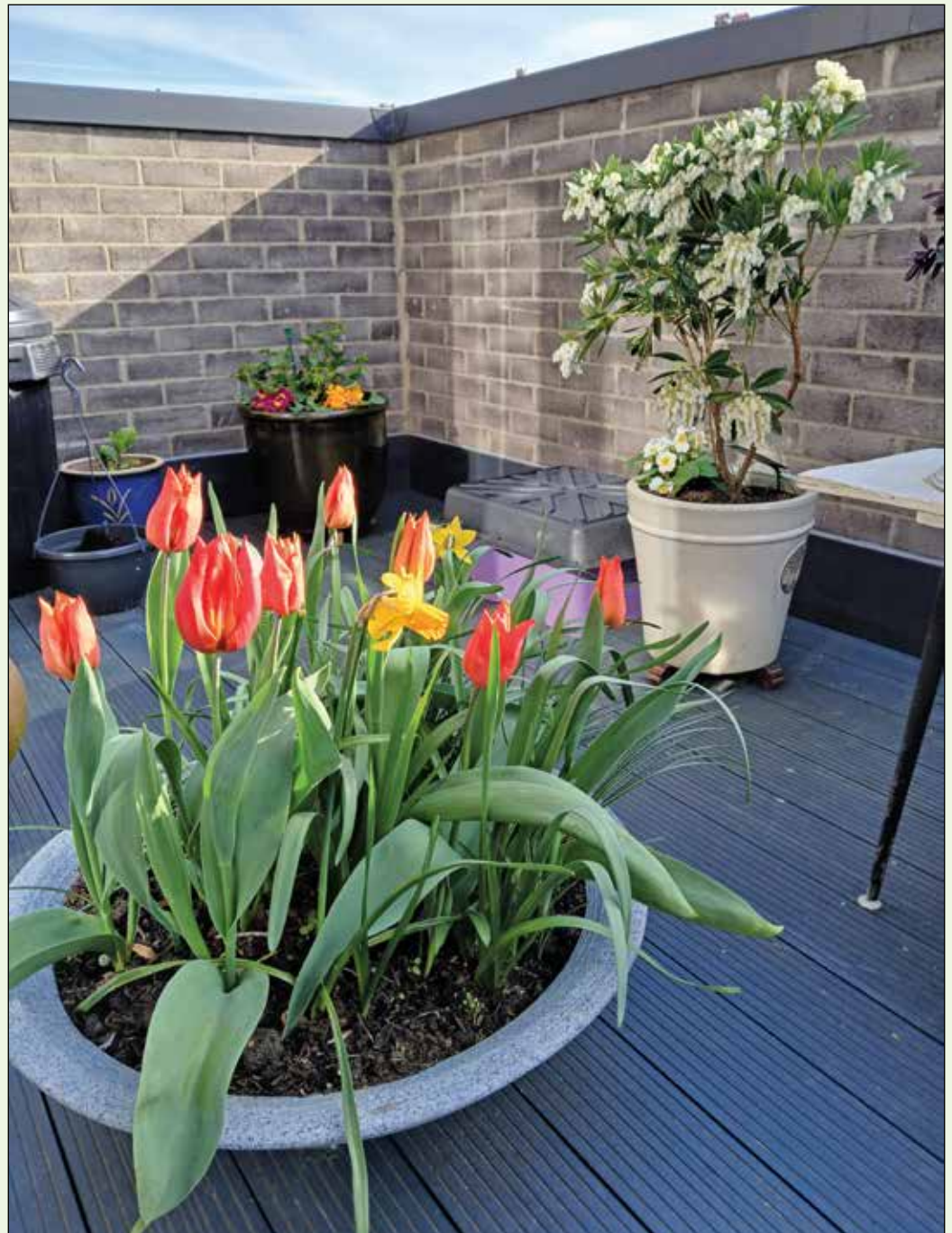
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*We are the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. We offer an interesting range of monthly meetings with guest speakers. Trust members and non-members are equally welcome. During the summer months we offer a variety of trips, some local, others 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](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org).*

Decision made, that a house move was necessary and no longer wishing to be responsible for its upkeep, I found an apartment with a balcony. Not just any balcony but one surrounded by a wall over one metre high, 13 metres long, facing south east and nice and sheltered. I forgot to mention that it's at the top of the building on the third floor.

Now the research is on to find shrubs and plants that will thrive, cover the wall and give pleasure throughout the year. My basic gardening rules still apply as I wish to have plants that will attract bees and other insect life, and bring small birds to a



*Nice and sheltered balcony*

newly purchased bird table that has sunflower seeds. It has not been visited by gulls, crows or starlings that are so common in urban areas and I hope not to do anything to attract them. I will not be putting out chips for the gulls – it would upset the neighbours! Unfortunately the mammal wildlife is excluded.

Planning the planting is now ongoing but because it is a new project it will be experimental. Perfume is important in gardens and I

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*I wish to have plants that will attract bees and other insect life ...*

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couldn't resist a rose named Queen Bee. Over the winter two hebes have flowered and a hellebore is still magnificent, A Pieris 'Temple Bells' is looking happy - covered in white flowers and the cutting of a hydrangea that I was given in 1971 produced a flower last year that was larger than the plant itself. A sarcocca

although very small has produced its minute flowers and perfume.

The 100% plant survival rate this winter has encouraged me to be bold, and planting is now benefiting from the knowledge that the winter has mostly been frost free. Finding evergreen shrubs with autumn berries is my next challenge as they must look attractive and feed the birds. However, at the same time they must not get too tall. And finally, I don't think I can live without a camelia!

# Swifts over Ipswich

**Sheila Roberts** *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

I'd like to start off with an apology. If you happened to have been travelling around Ipswich on the 7th or 8th May and saw a woman wandering around looking a bit distracted with her nose in the air – it was probably me. Because around that time, one of my favourite wildlife moments was about to happen.

It's when the swifts arrive back in my part of Ipswich. I absolutely adore the way they zoom around the sky at super speed with their distinctive curved back wings. And when they are due, I'm one of many people eagerly watching the sky for the first glimpse of them. Hoping they've successfully navigated the long migration from Africa.

In recent years, like so many species, their population has taken a dive. It's sad to hear that in the last 25 years, their numbers have dropped by a quarter.

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*Experts have discovered that swifts follow each other's calls ...*

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As we all tidy up our roofs and eaves, suitable swift nesting sites become scarcer. And a swift can't nip down and help itself to a few sunflower seeds from your garden feeder – it needs a sky full of flying insects which it catches to refuel after a journey of over 3000 miles to get here. Sadly, their sky larder is somewhat depleted these days so it's harder for them to get into breeding condition or feed their chicks.

So what's the answer?

Firstly, somewhere to nest. Swift nests are pretty spartan – not much more than an enclosed flat surface in something like a roof space. With gaps between roof tiles less common and far fewer little holes in our eaves, we need to offer swifts alternative accommodation. The answer is a swift box – or preferably more than one as they like to breed close to other swifts.

Which brings me on to another distracted-woman moment I had last summer. I happened to be visiting the Suffolk Archives building in Fore Street known as The Hold. As I walked towards the rear of the building, I heard a cacophony of swift calls. Yet the sky was completely devoid of any life beyond a couple of black headed gulls patrolling for abandoned snacks.



*Swift boxes at The Hold*

I soon realised that I was hearing recordings of swift calls being played from the University of Suffolk building behind The Hold.

Experts have discovered that swifts follow each other's calls when looking for nest sites. So if you put up a swift box in an area without an existing swift population, even if they happen to fly overhead, they probably won't bother to come and look for a nesting site. But if you play their calls, they think there are other birds nesting in the area and will come down to take a look. It may be that the birds are juveniles who aren't quite old enough to breed that year but they are prospecting for future nest sites and will come back next year to rear their own young.

Closer inspection of the university building showed that there was a whole row of swift boxes along one side. Further nosing around revealed that there are also swift boxes of a different design tucked into the rear of The Hold building. Hats off to Suffolk County Council, Concertus and the University of Suffolk for providing these desirable dwellings.

As well as a nesting site, swifts need flying insects to eat. So if you want



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to do your bit to help fuel a swift, find ways of encouraging more native insects into your garden.

A local campaign - SOS Swifts is a joint project between Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Bird Group. Volunteers are working tirelessly to spread the word about swifts and encourage the provision of more swift boxes. You can find out more about swifts and the campaign at [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/swifts](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/swifts) - including handy videos.

If you want to put up a swift box, make sure you buy from a reputable source – they can be ordered from Ipswich Wildlife Group or the RSPB mail order shop stocks them.

Together, I hope we can ensure future generations will still be able to experience the joy of swifts screaming around our roof tops.



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**Ipswich Group Newsletter**

### **Fancy a lovely trip out this summer?**

The Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust would like to extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to enjoy a gentle walk while chatting to friendly people and learning more about our local wildlife.

Four events are taking place this summer. They kick off with a trip to Newbourne Springs. This wonderfully atmospheric wildlife trust reserve will have lovely displays of wildflowers and there is a possibility of hearing nightingales.

Next up is a trip to look for butterflies within the borough boundary. The site off Landseer Road throws up a surprising array of different species and an expert guide will help us find them. Fingers crossed for a sunny morning.

The third local event is a stroll along the River Orwell to look for waders and enjoy the beautiful flowers that grow along the banks.

And finally, a very special opportunity to take a walking tour around one of the most wildlife friendly farms in Suffolk. Places for this are limited and must be pre-booked. Demand is likely to be high so don't delay booking.

## Events Diary

### **Saturday 11th May Walk: Newbourne Springs Nature Reserve**

Walk: Newbourne Springs Nature Reserve for spring birds and flowers. With optional pub visit afterwards. Meet at reserve car park at 10.30am. IP12 4NY.

### **Thursday 27th June Walk: Butterflies of Landseer Park Melvyn Eke and David Dowding**

Walk: Optional visit to a second site nearby. Meet at car park on Landseer Road at 10am.

### **Saturday 6th July Walk: Birds along the River Orwell Roger Pratt**

Walk: Join volunteer ranger and Roger Pratt for a 4 mile stroll from Levington Creek to Trimley Marshes. Meet at 10.30am outside the Harbourside Kitchen Coffee Shop near to the entrance to the Suffolk Yacht Harbour. IP10 0LN.

### **Tuesday 13th August Walk: An evening tour on foot around Shimpling Park Farm**

Walk: An evening tour on foot around Shimpling Park Farm near Bury St Edmunds to find out how growing organic has benefitted a wealth of wildlife. Places strictly limited and must be booked in advance via the SWT website events page.

Full details of each of these events and the costs/suggested donations can be found at [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events). Use the filter for the Ipswich Group to find them quickly. For enquiries please email [ipswichgroupswt@gmail.com](mailto:ipswichgroupswt@gmail.com)



# Mud glorious, mud!

## Lucy Shepherd

*Wilder Communities Manager, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*



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As I write, in March, looking out onto another rainy day, it's hard to remember the dry days we've had recently.

A perk of the winter months is often crisp cold days paired with bright blue skies; however, it feels as if we have been a little short changed of these. Instead, we've had day after day of rain, and with it seemingly endless amounts of mud. Despite our activities going ahead rain, snow, or shine, even we must admit we've been caught thinking a dry day or two wouldn't go amiss, but the recent weather has forced us to think about and embrace mud a little more than we normally would.

Mud is also known as soil, slobber, slabber, slutch, slushiness or sloshiness, and we often stomp straight over it without a second thought. However, mud is like the stomach of the earth as it's responsible for consuming, digesting and cycling nutrients and it plays a very important role in ecosystems helping to produce a huge amount of our food, with other species relying on mud too.

Several species typically come to mind first when thinking of those associated with mud such as those that live under the soil like rabbits, moles, foxes, and badgers, but there are also a whole host of less fluffy species that are intrinsically linked with mud. The dauber wasp uses tiny clumps of mud to create their clever nests, and female earwigs lovingly spend the winter immersed in mud looking after their eggs rotating and licking them to save them becoming mouldy – a very rare display of parental care in the invertebrate world.

Mud isn't just essential for food production and habitats etc, but also a brilliant resource for playing, providing hours of fun. When the weather churns up the huge amounts of mud, as it has done recently, a great way for us to connect people to nature across Ipswich is to make use of it. We've made muddy faces, endless batches of 'delicious mud cakes', identified different species from footprints left in the mud, dug for and admired hundreds of worms, and of course splashed in as many muddy swamp-like puddles as we can.

If you needed any more convincing about how glorious mud can be, there is a type of bacteria in our soils that increases serotonin levels in our brains, which in turn makes us happy.

So next time you're feeling the need for a mood boost – why not head outside and jump in that muddy puddle that you might usually avoid, or grab a clod of mud and give it a good sniff for that serotonin surge.

Join our team across Ipswich for a whole host of different events and activities. We've got sessions for Tots, teens and adults too. Check out our Instagram page at @swtipswich or Facebook page @ Suffolk Wildlife Trust in Ipswich or alternatively our website - [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events-in-ipswich](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events-in-ipswich).

# Flooding!

**James Baker** *Manager, Greenways Countryside Project*

The wettest winter in Greenways' 30 years (and probably longer!) has caused some problems for us!



**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 Gipping – The view from the Bailey Bridge at Sroughton Nature Reserve – the river path invisible under the flood!*

Not only was it more difficult than usual to get all of our busy winter work schedule completed, but the series of storms and floods damaged almost all of the boardwalks in Belstead Brook Park as well as washing away some of the new river path we had just completed at Sroughton Nature Reserve! A 50 metre long stretch of raised timber boardwalk at Ellenbrook Meadow was so badly damaged that we had to remove it altogether!

For most of the winter, huge parts of Belstead Brook Park were underwater, and we have been unable to assess the damage fully, let alone start repair works. Over the coming spring and summer, our wonderful volunteers will be out trying to repair and replace all the damage to restore access to our beautiful nature reserves.

At Sroughton Nature Reserve, after working on the new, improved river path for nearly three years, storm Babet

flooded the reserve and washed away parts of the path we had just finished. Again, the necessary repair and replacement works will be carried out here as soon as possible.

As it seems likely, warm, wet winters are going to be more common and more extreme in the future, we have to re-assess the viability of some pathways and maybe accept that some will only be available seasonally, as the cost of replacing timber boardwalks is very high.



*Bobbitts Meadow flood – Much of Belstead Brook Park spent part of the winter underwater*





Enchanted tree graphics

### Rushmere St Andrew Enchanted tree trail

In mid-February, Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council launched their new Enchanted Tree Trail around the Sandlings and Mill Stream Local Nature Reserves, with a spectacular public event that included the projection of images onto the Rushmere Water Tower.

The trail was thought up and put together by the Parish Clerk and Assistant Clerk with Rubbish Walks founder and local resident, Jason Alexander. The trail has 14 feature trees that each has a 'face' hidden

upon it and signage to help those using the trail to find all the characters. Our volunteers helped by installing the wooden posts for the signage, building a large log habitat pile and an 'enchanted village', along with putting up the faces and colourful graphics around the play area where the trail starts and finishes.

Around 250 local people attended the launch event and hundreds more have been using and enjoying the trail since – an excellent way of helping to engage local people with their natural environment.



Building the log pile



Tree trail face



*Muntjac*

**Spring Wood deer exclusion**

Another consequence of warmer winters is perhaps the seemingly huge rise in deer numbers in our reserves – especially muntjac. It is unusual now to not see one whilst walking through Spring Wood or Millennium Wood – and they are amazingly untroubled by human presence. The understorey and field layer of the woodlands is almost completely gone in some areas where grazing pressure is at its highest, with even bluebell leaves being grazed short.

We have been watching this increase over the last few years, aware that it

is having a direct and indirect impact on many other important species. Nightingale numbers have dropped sharply in the area, and although there are international factors involved too, it seems likely that the lack of good dense undergrowth is a key reason for their no longer nesting here. The hazel dormice too are at yet further risk, as without the proper regrowth of the hazel coppice stools along with honeysuckle and bramble – they are unlikely to find enough food or safe places to nest or hibernate.

This winter we have erected a few

small deer ‘exclosures’ within Spring Wood, using temporary ‘Heras’ fencing panels – which we hope will demonstrate how without deer, there is natural regeneration of trees, shrubs and flowers as well as better coppice regrowth.

We will monitor the fenced areas closely and if, as we expect, the results are positive, we will look into sources of funding for wider areas of more permanent fencing in the hope we can protect our vulnerable woodland species and maybe even bring back some species lost locally in recent years.



*Exclosures to keep the deer out*

# Searching for help

**Peter Maddison** *Chair, Butterfly Conservation Suffolk*

We have just over 600 members in Suffolk Branch and we thank these for their commitment to the conservation of butterflies.

Some will be content to support BC with membership fees, others will want to become involved by recording butterflies and moths, suggesting new field event venues, planning and planting Wild Spaces or suggesting new projects. All of these vital to the conservation of butterflies and moths.

The Committee is relatively small and members have specific roles, many of them quite time consuming. If we are to do more, we could do with more help. We need your ideas, and we need your involvement. Might you be able to encourage people where you live to create Wild Spaces? You don't have to be a member to suggest things, but if you'd like to become one, please contact us!

We have a pot of money earmarked for projects. We need projects! And we would like your help in identifying areas where we can become involved



© Colin Hullis

*Red Admiral doing pretty well*

with local people to enhance the conservation of butterflies and moths. This might be long-term wildflower areas, hedgerow and edge improvement, woodland ride management, specific species habitat

improvement, the list goes on....

Please let me know your ideas – we need your help if we are to attain our aim of promoting butterflies in Suffolk.

## Phenology

**Julian Dowding** *Secretary, Butterfly Conservation Suffolk*

Although we've had some sunny periods already this year, it still seems too cold for many of us to be thinking about butterflies. However, our species make the most of what's on offer weather-wise (or should I say, climate-wise) and pay little heed to us.

Things are definitely changing in terms of species' first emergence. If one takes a look in butterfly books published say 20 years or more ago, and compares emergence times then, to the last few years, one finds species like Silver-studded Blues (one of Suffolk's rarer species) are emerging much earlier. No longer are the first seen in late June but now in very late May, and always by the first week of June. This is a summer species that has to go through all four stages of life cycle in the year it emerges, although the eggs are laid in the preceding year. In the list below (first sightings in Suffolk this year), it's worth noting that Red Admiral, which is unable to survive winter frosts, seems to be doing pretty well. It would be an interesting species to study, as it's also

a migrant species, with butterflies arriving from the continent throughout the year.

**First sightings to date in 2024**  
Peacock 3rd January - Red Admiral

4th January - Brimstone 16th January - Small Tortoiseshell 28th January.  
Comma 6th March - Holly Blue 16th March - Orange Tip 18th March - Small White 18th March - Large White 18th March - Speckled Wood 20th March.



© Colin Hullis

*Peacock - first to be sighted this year*

# Events far and wide

## Martin Cant Ipswich Wildlife Group

### Hospice donation

In January we re-visited the East Anglian Children's Hospice where we donated a cheque for £1,500.

This was money raised from selling 150 reindeer I made from harvested wood, which we sold at two events in Holywells Park just before Christmas. IWG kindly doubled the raised donation of £750. My wife Audrey knitted coats and scarfs to fit the reindeer which raised an extra £1 to every sale.



Martin, Audrey and Mel make the donation

first event of the year, where Gerry and I sold beanpoles, peasticks and wildlife homes to visiting potato enthusiasts.

### Mini Beast Festival

IWG were invited to day three of the Mini Beast Festival at Christchurch Mansion during February half term. We had a great variety of wildlife homes on offer, but the bug boxes are always popular with families, especially the children.



The mini-beast festival in full swing

Their faces light up when you mention the process involves using a hammer, which echoed a bit in the hall, but it did sound like a proper workshop. At the end of a very busy day we had made over 50 insect homes, along with several bird boxes and hedgehog homes.

### Cliff Lane School

IWG and Friends of Holywells Park were approached by Hannah (Forest School teacher) at Cliff Lane School to help with a project in their wildlife areas within the school playing field. The areas were very well managed and had a variety of good habitats with various wildlife building projects on the go, all being built by the pupils.

Their ongoing requirements were mainly wood products to enable the Forest School pupils to continue building wildlife habitats for conservation and help attract more wildlife to the school grounds. We were



Barnies at work



Alan and Colin take a break in the barn

able to supply bean poles for den building, wood for making a sawhorse, together with different size tree trunk rounds for seats and chopping blocks. We also provided bird and bat box kits and half a dozen hedgehog homes for the wild areas. Along with all this, we provided green wood in various diameters for whittling, chopping and carving.

The pupils were very enthusiastic to help unload the materials from the truck and managed to complete the task in next to no time. I think they would have stayed there all over the weekend if they were allowed, great to see everyone enjoying their time in the wild areas. It was a real pleasure to help in this great project.

We are now busy at the barn trying to build up more stock for the Suffolk show looming at the end of May!



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.*

We also attended a Winter Wonderland Christmas event at the Hospice for families involved, where they made reindeers which we donated without charge. We had some lovely feedback from the families and a really nice comment from the Hospice, who reckoned we were the star attraction at the event!

### Potato Day

Potato Day held at Otley College in February, was the



Gerry on guard at Potato Day

# Holywells - A very wet park

## Yvonne and Andy *Friends of Holywells Park*

Holywells Park is a very wet Park. Its underlying geology creates many natural springs and seepages which feed the six ponds.

It's been a very wet Winter and early Spring and, for the first time in many years, the Friends were unable to hold their annual Wassail in the Orchard in January. This was because the entrance was flooded and access was impossible. Luckily, we were able to use another location in the Park to wake the orchard trees, and a good time was had by all.

### A tale of two Otters

At the start of the year, for the first time in about a century, two otters made the ponds in Holywells, their home. The thinking is, that they must have come up from the Orwell in search of food, and found fish a-plenty in the canal and ponds. Otters are generally nocturnal, but our otters were very active during daylight hours and, consequently, drew many people to the Park as word spread of their presence. They did not seem to be bothered by the attention and delighted many with their fishing skills and antics.



*Otter hunting in the park 1930's*

Many people took some amazing photos and Jon and Sarah of the Bishops Cafe ran an otter photographic competition.

Compare this to the fate of otters in the Park in the 1930's. During this time, otters were hunted and killed. Thankfully, some

attitudes to wildlife have changed over the decades. Tragically, one of our otters, nicknamed 'Ollie', was killed by a car whilst crossing the road on Cliff Lane, so its fate was determined by human activity, just in a different way.

Ollie's body was spotted by a



### Friends of Holywells Park

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

local resident who informed the Environment Agency and the body was sent to Cardiff University for a Post-Mortem. The University has a long term environmental surveillance scheme, using otters found dead to investigate contaminants, disease and population biology across the U.K.

Sadly, the other otter hasn't been seen for a number of weeks now, but, fingers crossed, we'll have these beautiful animals visit our park again in the not too distant future.



*Holywells Ollie*

© Chris Courtney

© Cobbold Family History Trust

# Wet winter work

**Kaye Roberts** *Secretary, 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 please contact secretary Kaye Roberts [kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com](mailto:kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com) or find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales



In December excess vegetation in the main pond was cut down and raked off and this was much appreciated by the nine Moorhens which began eagerly feeding to ensure they took full advantage of the new cleared area.

A birch tree which had suffered storm damage has been removed from near the pond and some old willows have also been cleared within the Dales. Earlier in the year some pruning of damaged or dead branches on the cherry plums was carried out and in March these were full of flower. It is normally a good time to appreciate the area with this display but the continuous rainy weather resulted in the main path being too muddy for some regular visitors.

Not much could be achieved during the January and February

work parties, but a fine day greeted us in March and the volunteers commenced clearing the den, which had been constructed of old fence panels and marker posts last summer. It took the volunteers all morning to remove this unsightly display.

One species that has taken advantage of the damp weather is the Scarlet Elf Cap, which usually has a presence in the Dales but this year they are particularly abundant in the wetter areas. The first frogspawn was visible in the pond as was a goldfish! A Chiffchaff was singing briefly and a Blackcap started tuning up during the morning and was approaching full song by early afternoon. Great Tits were calling throughout the Dales and at the end of the work party we watched Long-tailed Tits building a nest.

*Above: Elf caps abundant in the Dales  
Left: Waymark posts removed from a den  
Right: Perfect ladybird-sized shelter  
Below: Moorhens taking advantage of the newly cut plants*



# Restoring nature in your back garden

**WWF.org.uk**

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. The good news is that you can help boost wildlife populations where you live. Here are five top tips on restoring your back garden into a place that welcomes nature.



## Plant native vegetation

One of the best things you can do for your local patch is to introduce native plants. Often immaculate gardens will harbour many non-native species that could out-compete native wildflowers. These plants might look great, but our pollinators really want native plants that they have evolved to feed from. So try planting some common knapweed or Bellflower seeds and give our pollinators a helping hand. You could also plant some native British herbs, such as wild garlic or corn mint, which would benefit you and local wildlife!

## Build a hedgehog highway

Hedgehogs are easily one of the nation's favourite mammals, but it is estimated that hedgehog numbers have declined by 98% since the 1950s – they desperately need our help. One way to help our beloved hedgehogs is to make a hedgehog highway through fenced gardens in your neighbourhood. Working with your neighbours, you could create a clear pathway for your local hedgehog population so they don't get stuck in urban gardens! Hedgehogs can travel upwards

of one mile per night, so travelling freely through our gardens helps them go about their nightly business.

## Let your grass grow

Letting your grass grow encourages wildflower growth and helps protect the wildlife that calls your garden "home". Frogs, newts and slow worms are just a few of the smaller animals that can be harmed when you mow the lawn. Having longer grass allows for a better shelter for creepy crawlies and provides habitats for amphibians and small mammals.

## Care for local birds

Putting out a variety of bird feed is a great way to attract different birds to your garden and help out bird populations simultaneously. After introducing a food source into your garden, you will soon notice that all sorts of birds appear. Prioritising the times of the year when extreme weather events occur, such as droughts or freezing spells, will ensure that birds are cared for in these difficult times. With nearly 30% of birds in Great Britain threatened with extinction and

## Wild Ipswich

*All the conservation organisations working together to inspire local people to help wildlife throughout the town and beyond.*  
[www.wildipswich.org](http://www.wildipswich.org)



© Colin Hulse

the likelihood of extreme weather events increasing due to climate change, providing extra food could help local bird populations flourish.

## Let it be

Perhaps the key tip to restoring your garden is letting it be. Nature was around long before human management – and it will be long after us. The natural world has its own way of overcoming problems and thriving when left to its own devices. So no more de-weeding or caring for pristine flower beds; just let nature do its thing. Much of what we mistake for weeds grows into wildflowers which can benefit a wide array of wildlife. So put those hedge clippers down and put your trust in nature.

*Reproduced with kind permission from Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service Spring 2024 Newsletter.*



# Scrub bashing, birds and spring

**Ann Havard** *Friends of Belstead Brook Park*

Our first work party of 2024 in January was attended by six hardy individuals braving the rather chilly weather in Spring Wood. A good morning of coppicing followed which kept us all warm.



## 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.*

We also processed a lot of material that had already been cut by the Spring Wood work party volunteers into bean poles, pea sticks, posts for dead hedging and odd sizes for firewood. Despite the cold weather the Great tits were already singing to mark out their territories and advertise for mates. It seemed a little bit early but perhaps they are better judges of the weather than us?

We were scrub bashing in February in Kiln Meadow and the clue is in the name here! If we didn't manage the area it would just revert to scrub and then woodland. Both of these habitats are of course great but it's good to have a mosaic or diversity of habitats to please all sorts of wildlife. There are woodland birds and there are grassland birds, woodland insects and plants and grassland insects and plants. By managing areas differently we can ensure that there is habitat for everything.

Talking about birds, I have noticed a real decline in the birds that visit our garden over the last couple of years. I do remember about 30 years ago our lawn could turn black with starlings strutting their stuff. Feeding, preening and squabbling - I love them. But now we just get one or two. We also used to get flocks of about 20 goldfinches - again now only a few and rarely. We live near Chantry Park and the open countryside - are they out there? Surely in the winter they would come to visit our bird feeders which have seeds, fat balls, cheese bits and other odd scraps. We have trees, shrubs, grass, a vegetable plot, mixed borders and a small pond, so where are the birds?



*Another neat dead-hedge*

I've Googled this question and it seems people all over the world are asking the same thing. Some explanations are that there are predators about (including cats), or just that the birds have migrated south for the winter. Looking on the RSPB website they say "The latest research suggests that intensive farming practices, particularly an increase in pesticides and fertiliser use is the main driver of most bird population declines."

They go on to say - "House Sparrows, Starlings and Skylarks are some of the

worst-affected birds. But the overall picture for birds is just as concerning - since 1980, one out of every six birds has been lost. That adds up to the loss of 600 million breeding birds over 40 years, according to a 2021 study from the RSPB, BirdLife International and the Czech Society for Ornithology." All very alarming.

We spent the entire morning in March clearing up other peoples rubbish in Stoke Park Wood and along the front of Bourne Park. I can never understand why people feel they can just chuck stuff in hedges, along roads and in Local Nature Reserves - it's sheer laziness - we all have bins at home, perhaps we need another Keep Britain Tidy campaign.

Fortunately there were some signs of Spring to cheer us up. Lots of Lords and Ladies in full leaf and quite a lot of birds singing. We also saw several Brimstone butterflies flitting about. These are one of the first to appear in Spring having overwintered somewhere sheltered. They will lay their eggs between May and June, hatch into caterpillars June to July, then having eaten their fill of Buckthorn will construct a chrysalis and emerge as a lovely yellow butterfly in August. Look out for them on a sunny, warm day.



*Clean-up in Stoke Park Wood*



# Volunteers making a difference

**Stephen Corley** *Chairman Portal Woodlands Conservation Group*

All pictures © S. Corley



*Festive treats*

In December, our volunteers were busy trimming back the hedges around the hazel tree area, clearing mud off the path and planting specimens of butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), also known as knee holly due to it being a low-growing bush with spiky leaves, and English walnut (*Juglans regia*) trees. Thank you to the local residents who kindly donated these plants.

The volunteers ended the morning by enjoying some festive food and drink to thank them for their hard work during the year. The main task early in the year has been laying wood chippings on some of the worst-worn and muddy woodland paths. Many thanks to Elite Tree Services for donating the chippings.

Visitors to the woodland might have noticed an exceptional number of trees



*Hedge trimming*

that have fallen in recent months. Along with our usual maintenance of dead or wind-blown trees, we have seen sooty bark disease, caused by the fungus *Cryptostroma corticale*, killing many of our sycamores (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). As its name implies, the visible symptom is that the tree trunk and branches become blackened. Physically, the tree



*Violets*



## 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.*

becomes extremely weak and brittle, with high winds easily snapping the tree. Unfortunately, there is no effective treatment and we hope that the disease will take its course and subside. Fortunately, spring brought more uplifting sights, with lovely displays of snowdrops (*Galanthus*), daffodils (*Narcissus*) and sweet violets (*Viola odorata*) for visitors to enjoy.

### Volunteer Work Mornings

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

Saturday 18th May  
Sunday 16th June  
Saturday 20th July  
**NO WORK MORNING IN AUGUST**

*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.*

# Plenty of action at SBG

**John Kornjaca** *Suffolk Bird Group*

As this item is compiled, birders across the county are looking forward to the promise of a sunny, bright and, above all else, a dry spring. The influx of spring/summer migrants is always a time of great optimism and this year, following what has been one of the wettest periods in living memory, many of my peers are looking forward to kicking off their wellingtons and waterproofs and making regular forays.

growth in the population of the iconic Barn Owl across Suffolk. Barn Owl Support Suffolk (BOSS) will attempt to continue the great work that has been carried out over the previous 18 years allowing SBG to accurately monitor the continued growth in the Barn Owl population.

A number of 3-D printed models of some of our threatened sea birds are being produced and located on appropriate nest sites to encourage birds to move away from less suitable sites such as buildings, bridges, and gardens. Lesser Black-backed Gull, Kittiwake and Little Tern models are produced from sustainable materials and hand painted. They are then placed on a suitable site, and, in tandem with audio recordings, the hope is that birds will be drawn to these suitable nest sites.

The AGM also allows SBG members to congratulate those members that have made an outstanding contribution to the work of the group with the presentation of two awards.

David Walsh collected the Denis Ockelton Trophy for making an outstanding contribution to Suffolk ornithology while the Garrod Award (in memory of Jean and Ken Garrod) went to young ornithologist Dan Zantboer. The AGM also featured a review of the 2023 birding



*Chiffchaff*

year presented by the knowledgeable Gi Grieco, while a brain-busting quiz penned by Suffolk Bird Report editor Nick Mason was well-received.

A recent development has seen a collaboration of SBG with the much-loved Bird Information Network Service (BINS) - the SBG website now hosts the 'rare and scarce' bird sightings of Suffolk as reported by BINS.

There are many rare and scarce birds to report in the county, two immature White-tailed Sea Eagles that have been seen among Red Kite and Buzzard in the Woolpit area of Suffolk have been a regular feature. Another rarity is a long staying Long-billed Dowitcher seen at SWT Carlton Marshes while a pair of gorgeous winter plumage Slavonian Grebes at Alton Water have also attracted interest.

The sightings of Snow Bunting and Bohemian Waxwing were recorded and the regular occurrence of Short-eared Owls along the coastal

margins indicate the higher than usual numbers of these wonderful large Owls seen in the UK this year.

The SBG host many indoor and outdoor events through the year providing members with an opportunity for birders to socialise with others and enjoy an interesting stroll while out birdwatching. In February 2024, approximately 30 members attended a guided walk around the new SWT reserve at Martlesham Wilds.

Listen out for the "tiff-taff-tiff-taff" song of early Chiffchaff and in late April/early May watch out for the arrival of fast-moving Swifts racing across our skies. If lucky, a calling Cuckoo in May is a wonderful sound to behold and, the Nightingale, a beautiful songster, shall announce its presence as it bids a welcome to the approaching summer months.

Further detail of the work of the Suffolk Bird Group can be found at: [www.suffolkbirdgroup.org](http://www.suffolkbirdgroup.org)

**Suffolk Bird Group**

Enquiries:  
[info@suffolkbirdgroup.org](mailto:info@suffolkbirdgroup.org)  
[www.suffolkbirdgroup.org](http://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.*

The Suffolk Bird Group, now in its 51st year, held its Annual General Meeting at the Hintlesham & Chattisham Community Hall in February. Hosted by the SBG president John Grant and Eddie Bathgate (Chair), members were informed of the financial position of the charity and many of the projects that have been undertaken or developed through 2023.

New life is being breathed into the Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project (SCBOP) – an inspirational project which commenced in 2005 and that has facilitated large scale



*Little Tern decoy*

© Gi Grieco

© Chris Keeling

# Christchurch Park bird sightings November to February 2024

**Philip Murphy** *Friends of Christchurch Park*

## November

The month's highlight was a Woodcock (perhaps originating from as far away as western Russia) flushed from the Upper Arboretum's meadow area on 21st.

A late brood of 12 Mallard ducklings was on the Wilderness Pond on 14th; only four remained on the next day and they were all seen to be predated by Black-headed Gulls.

Only two Little Grebes remained by the month's end on the Wilderness Pond, where Mandarin Duck totals peaked at 16 on 5th and 26th. Likewise, only one Cormorant was noted at any one time; it was observed that this species fished on Round Pond and then rested on Wilderness Pond.

## December

Mandarin Duck totals on Wilderness Pond declined sharply early in the month with none present on 10th and 11th; this absence is possibly explained by reports of 23 on the former decoy ponds, Ipswich Golf Course, on 1st and 33 on ponds at Playford on 6th. However, totals on Wilderness Pond started to increase from 13th, when nine were present, and peaked at 21 on 31st.

One of the two Little Grebes remaining on the Wilderness Pond had started to exhibit the first signs of breeding plumage on 24th; perhaps even more unexpected was the sight on 31st of the second grebe with a beakfull of aquatic vegetation. However, there was no subsequent evidence of early nest construction.

Mallard totals peaked at 40 on 24th – copulation was noted frequently during the month. One, sometimes two, Cormorants were usually present on either of the ponds.

Frequent sightings of a Common Buzzard late in the month perhaps indicated that it was roosting in the park, and an immaculate Red Kite was over the Upper Arboretum on 23rd.

## January

Generally mild conditions prevailed in the first half of the month during which time Mandarin Duck totals peaked at 21 on 9th and 14th, a Great Spotted Woodpecker was heard drumming on 7th and a Song Thrush sang on most days



*Little Grebe adult*



*Spring in the park*

in the Wilderness Pond woodland. One of the two Cormorants present on 14th was starting to develop breeding plumage with white patches on its thighs and white feathering on its head.



*Cormorant*

A cold spell of weather during 15th to 20th saw the Round Pond being completely frozen over, and only the northern 25% of the Wilderness Pond remained unfrozen. The most dramatic effect was a sharp increase in Mandarin Duck totals up to 33 on 19th, the highest total at this site since September 2021. This increase is probably the result of other ponds frequented by Mandarin Ducks freezing over completely. There were, predictably, no sightings of Cormorants while the ponds were frozen. The year's first sighting of a Grey Wagtail occurred on 24th.

## February

Fine and calm weather witnessed groups of four and six Common Buzzards, on 1st and 12th respectively, soaring together high over the park.

On 24th, a third Little Grebe was present on Wilderness Pond together with the two which has remained at this site throughout the winter months. There were no sightings of Cormorants this month – had they emptied the Round Pond of fish



**Friends of  
Christchurch Park**

Chair: Peter Gray 07709 634161  
Membership Secretary: Robert Fairchild 01473 254255  
[www.friendsofchristchurchpark.co.uk](http://www.friendsofchristchurchpark.co.uk)

Follow us on Facebook@ChristchurchPark  
and Twitter@ChristchurchPk

*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.*

of the size they required?

At the month's end, Great Spotted Woodpeckers were drumming at three sites in the park, but Green Woodpeckers were conspicuous by their apparent absence. It was encouraging to locate three singing Song Thrushes at the Park on 17th.

Other reports included the year's first Lesser Black-backed Gull on 7th, Treetreeper on 17th, 15 Siskins on 4th including an immaculate male drinking from a puddle and a pre-roost gathering of 34 Magpies on 12th.

On 27th, a Chiffchaff heard calling (as opposed to singing) in the woodland adjacent to Wilderness Pond was either an overwintering bird or an early summer visitor.

With many thanks to Brian Macdonald and Tony Powell for their contribution to this article.

# New Orchards Popping up across Ipswich

**David Dowding** *Wildlife and Education Team Leader, Ipswich Borough Council*

As well as the usual winter habitat management, IBC's Wildlife Team has been busy with tree planting projects. One of which was the planting of new community orchards across the town.



**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.*

Funded by Trees for Cities, the Ipswich Coronation Orchard Project has seen us plant 76 fruit trees in 11 Community Orchards, with the trees coming from the East of England Apples and Orchards Project. The varieties chosen all have a royal connection with names such as "Prince Edward", "Princess" and "Monarch" and all come from the East of England. Traditionally we have always planted Suffolk or Essex varieties, but we have chosen trees from slightly further afield this time, to provide us with a variety of different fruit trees across the town.



*Cherry Blossom Holywells park*



*King Charles coronation orchard*

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*... the Ipswich Coronation Orchard Project has seen us plant 76 fruit trees in 11 Community Orchards ...*

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These new King Charles Coronation Orchards can be found at:

- Chantry Park Former Rose Garden
- Claddagh Orchard
- Bonny Crescent
- Bourne Park
- Brunswick Road Recreation Ground
- Dumbarton Recreation Ground
- Draymans Way

- Gippeswyk Park
- Murrayfield Primary School
- Nacton Crescent
- Whitton Recreation Ground

We were also lucky to get 10 trees to plant across two 'Golden Orchards' in celebration of The Tree Council's 50th Anniversary. The trees selected all have golden names such as 'Golden Noble' and 'Golden Hornet'. These orchards, planted at Badshah Avenue and Alderman Road Recreation Ground, were planted with help from Ipswich Tree Warden Network, local residents and volunteers from Ipswich Town Football Club Foundation.

These new orchards, alongside our existing orchards at Chantry Park, Holywells Park, Christchurch Park, Murray Park, Castle Hill Recreation Ground and Alexandra Park create a great network of orchards across the town, not only providing home grown fruit for residents but also a fantastic resource for wildlife.

The habitat mosaic of trees, grasses, shrubs, and wildflowers caters for lots of species. As fruit trees age quickly, they retain small sections of deadwood creating the perfect microhabitats for invertebrates and birds as well as rare fungi and lichens and plants such as mistletoe. They also tend to flower early, providing valuable spring nectar for queen bumblebees and butterflies and later in the year the autumn fruit provides a pre-hibernation banquet for small mammals and overwintering birds.

# Looking forward to a bit of sun

**Tim Kenny** *Leader, RSPB Ipswich Group*



© Colin Hullis

*Brambling*

**It won't have escaped anybody's notice that the past winter was exceptionally wet.**

Water levels all around our rivers and lakes have been at record highs; to take one example, the Scrape at Minsmere, usually winter haunt of the surface feeding dabbling ducks, has seen the diving species such as goldeneye and tufted duck join them, having enough draught for them to feed in their preferred manner. The South Hide was under two feet of water for a few weeks, whilst the path from Wildlife Lookout to the sluice was closed due to flooding for pretty much the entire winter.

It's largely for this reason that I am looking forward to a bit of sun and some spring warmth. Whatever the activity (with the possible exception of wild swimming), being cold and wet is never fun. Our group had an outing on March 10th to Santon Downham and despite the weather, saw some good birds. Impressive numbers of redwings were

gathered in the trees, readying themselves for their migration northwards. Listen for their thin "tseep" contact calls overhead at night as they migrate during March and April, and also whist they are inbound during October and November. Great spotted woodpeckers were enthusiastically drumming to proclaim territories, and the very rare lesser spotted woodpecker was also briefly heard, although this sparrow-sized relative of the great spot did not put in an appearance for us. The towpath was heavy with mud, and at this point your author discovered the hard way that his walking boots were not waterproof after all.

We decided to head over the border into Norfolk (ensuring all paperwork and injections were in order!) to Lynford Arboretum. En route a large group of around fifty bramblings were feeding in the road, their white rumps brightening up the dull day as they flew away from my car. At Lynford we saw hawfinches,



© Tim Kenny

*Hawfinches, Lynford Arboretum*



## Ipswich Local Group

Group Leader Tim Kenny  
Tel 01394 809236  
ipswichrspliblocalgroup@yahoo.com  
<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.*

yellowhammers, nuthatches and more bramblings, along with the more common tits and finches. So, despite the weather, everybody went home happy.

The above trip is just one of many of our outdoor trips, which increase in frequency over the spring and summer months. Why not join us at one of them soon? We welcome everyone along of all abilities and there's no charge. So if you've been meaning to start on your birdwatching journey but never quite got round to it, why not come along? You can find out more in the listings section of this magazine, or check out our local group website, <https://group.rspb.org.uk/ipswich/> where you'll find details of our forthcoming events and what we've been up to lately. We can't promise you hawfinches though.

# Snippets

## Ancient Woodland Survey Volunteers

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service is looking for volunteers to undertake woodland surveys throughout the Spring and early Summer of 2024.

These surveys will provide crucial information for the Ancient Woodland Inventory update that is currently taking place across Suffolk. Long-established woodland sites have been mapped digitally but field surveys are needed to provide evidence of their age.

This role is suitable for those with woodland surveying experience and an interest in conserving Ancient Woodland. Contact [www.suffolkbis.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbis.org.uk)



## Swift box trashed

This is what a pair of Starlings can do to a Swift nest box if they get there first. To prevent this, try bunging up the entrance hole with an old sock until your Swifts re-appear. Having said that, of course Starlings need a nest home too, so the choice is yours.



## Free food at Jimmy's

If you are in the area of Jimmy's Farm and Wildlife Park at Wherstead, keep a look out for Red Kites and Ravens. They turn up in the skies around the Farm every morning to help themselves to feed put out for the Park's animals. Jimmy Docherty says that he is happy to be feeding the local wildlife as well as those within the Park.



## Ipswich Town Football Club Foundation support Tree Council



ITFC Foundation staff gathered at Alderman Park Recreation Ground, alongside volunteers from the Tree Warden Network to support Ipswich Borough Council in planting a new community orchard.

The orchard is made up of apple and pear trees, provided by The Tree Council as part of a UK wide project to plant "50 Golden Orchards" to mark the organisation's 50th Anniversary.

# Events Diary

## MAY

**Wednesday 1st May 6.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING**  
Nightingale evening at Kiln Meadow and Spring Wood. Meet at Marbled White Drive Ipswich IP8 3TL. TM143417. 2hrs. 2-3miles. **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

**Saturday 4th May 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.**

**Monday 6th May 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING**  
Groton Wood Suffolk Wildlife Trust Reserve for spring birds and other wildlife. Meet at reserve car park IP7 6HD. TL 976429. 2-3hrs. 2-3miles. **Leader Tim Kenny.**

**Monday 6th May 2pm SPRING WOOD DAY**  
Join Greenways, Ipswich Wildlife Group, Friends of Belstead Brook Park and others who host this free celebration of Spring Wood, with woodland tours, woodland crafts, music, refreshments and fun at the events area in Kiln Meadow, Pinewood. **See Ipswich Wildlife Group Facebook page or Greenways social media for details.**



**Saturday 11th May 10.30am Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group WALK**  
Newbourne Springs Nature Reserve for spring birds and flowers. With optional pub visit afterwards. Meet at reserve car park IP12 4NY.

**Saturday 18th May 10am to noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING**  
all ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **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.**



**Sunday 19th May 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 25th May 8am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT**  
The Kings Forest. Meet at Kings Forest car park Map Ref: TL825749. Postcode IP28 6UR What3Words hexes.marmalade.disband. **Leader David Walsh Tel. 07947 051223**

**Tuesday 28th May 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK**  
Rushmere Common. Meet at Heath Road entrance IP4 5SL. TM197445

*Want to join in?*

**Take a look at Regular Events on page 24**

## JUNE

**Thursday 6th June 7pm Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT**  
Upper Hollesley Common. Meet at the upper car park for evening walk on the heath. TM335470 Postcode IP12 3HU. What3Words trainers.storerroom.debate. **Leader Dave Pearsons Tel. 07913 620665.**

**Saturday 8th June 10am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING**  
RSPB Hollesley Marshes for breeding birds. Meet at reserve car park IP12 3JW. TM370448. 2-3hrs. 2-3miles. **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

**Saturday 16th June 10am to noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING**  
all ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **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.**



**Sunday 16th June 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 19th June 8.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING**  
(Date and time to be confirmed) Nightjar evening at Upper Hollesley Common. Meet at upper car park IP12 3HU. TM335471. **Check website for updates or email: smarginson@btinternet.com**

**Sunday 23rd June 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT**  
Fen Drayton Lakes and Hope Farm. Meet at Fen Drayton car park. Charges apply, PayByPhone app. Map Ref: TL342690. Post Code: CB24 4RB. What3Words: typically.first.manages. **Leaders Adam Faiers and Henry Cook Tel. 07708 521852.**

**Tuesday 25th June 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK**  
Kiln Meadow and Spring Wood. Meet at Marbled White Drive Ipswich IP8 3TL. TM143417

**Thursday 27th June 10am Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group WALK**  
Butterflies of Landseer Park with Melvyn Eke and David Dowding. Optional visit to a second site nearby. Meet at car park on Landseer Road.



## JULY

**Saturday 6th July 8.30am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT**  
Redgrave and Lopham Fen. Meet at the reserve centre car park. Map Ref: TM052802. Postcode IP22 2HX. What3Words vineyard.vaulting.warping. **Leader: David Walsh Tel. 07947 051223**

**Saturday 6th July 10.30am Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group WALK**  
Birds along the River Orwell. Join volunteer ranger and Roger Pratt for a four mile stroll from Levington Creek to Trimley Marshes. Meet outside the Harbourside Kitchen Coffee Shop near to the entrance to the Suffolk Yacht Harbour IP10 0LN.



**Tuesday 9th July 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK**  
Landseer Park for butterflies. Meet at Clappgate Lane middle entrance IP3 0RE. TM183425



**Saturday 20th July 10am to noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING**  
all ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **For more details of the Group's events, and to check for date changes, please go to: [pwcg.onesuffolk.net](http://pwcg.onesuffolk.net) or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.**

**Sunday 21st July 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 30th July 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK**  
Holywells Park. Meet at Stable Block off Cliff Lane IP3 0PG. TM176432

## AUGUST

**Saturday 10th August 7.30am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING**  
Landguard Nature Reserve Felixstowe for passage migrants. Meet at 07:30 at Landguard Fort car park IP11 3TW. TM285320. 2-3hrs. 2-3miles. **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

**Tuesday 13th August Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group WALK**  
An evening tour on foot around Shimpling Park Farm near Bury St Edmunds to find out how growing organic has benefitted a wealth of wildlife. **Places strictly limited and must be booked in advance via the SWT website events page.**

**Sunday 18th August 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT**  
Frampton Marsh. Meet at the reserve car park. Map Ref: TF357903. Post Code: PE20 1AY.  
What3Words: left.linguists.these.  
**Leader Adam Faiers Tel. 07708 521852.**

**Sunday 18th August 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**



# 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](mailto: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 see Facebook page [www.facebook.com/ipswichFOE/](http://www.facebook.com/ipswichFOE/)

## SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY

**Contact Kaye Roberts [kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com](mailto:kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com)**

## 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](mailto: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](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org)**

## FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am-12pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust NATURE AND NATTER

Location varies. A monthly group for those aged 60+ who enjoy the outdoors. Meet new people whilst doing a different wild activity each month. **Book online [suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://wildipswich.org/fobbp) or email [fobbp@wildipswich.org](mailto:fobbp@wildipswich.org)**

## SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 1pm-3pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust 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](http://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](http://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.