

WILDER

DERBYSHIRE



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

SUMMER 2021

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk



1-7 JUNE

VOLUNTEERS' WEEK A BIG THANK YOU!

It is Volunteers' Week this month and we would like to take the opportunity to say a massive THANK YOU to our brilliant volunteers. Whether you help in our shops, work on our reserves, do data admin, provide photography and filming, or share your expertise with us, you all have a positive impact on the work we do helping wildlife in Derbyshire; we really couldn't do this without you.



Jo Smith
Chief Executive Officer



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On the cover

Bee *Bombus pascuorum* on aster © Rachel Scopes.
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Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

WELCOME

Protecting peat must be a top priority

Peat is described as the UK's Amazon for good reason. It is a rare species-rich habitat and an incredibly efficient carbon sink.

Sadly though, we have lost most (94 per cent) of our lowland peatlands. They have been damaged or destroyed by extraction or drained for farmland. Few peatlands remain in a natural state. So, we welcome the fact that the government has recently published its long-awaited peat action plan.

The plan includes a commitment to end the use of peat in the amateur horticulture sector, with consultation on phasing out the use of horticultural peat promised for 2021. The voluntary approach has not worked, with the volume of peat sold in the UK actually rising by nine per cent in 2020.

It is essential that the plan is converted into real action and the consultation needs to be fast tracked. In the year in which we host the critical international summit on climate change in Glasgow, we have a duty to inspire others to act by acting decisively on our own domestic ambition: protecting our vital peat stores of carbon must be top of the list.

We also need to address the issue of burning peat. In January, the government announced the introduction of a partial ban of burning heather and grass on peatland. This is a start, but it's not enough. We must put the brakes on the massive carbon emissions arising from damaged peat, which result in almost five per cent of the UK's annual emissions. This means stopping burning and intensifying the work to restore and protect our upland bogs.

We will need your help to ensure that the ban on the selling and burning of peat is implemented, so do please look out for updates on how you can help us keep up the pressure in the coming months.

Thank you for your support.

FEATURES



8

4 News



12

8 Peak District National Park



16

12 A Vision for a Wild Peak



18

16 Down on the Farm



26

18 Farming for Wildlife

22 Natural Flood Management

26 British Hedgehog Preservation Society

28 I vote for Wildlife

30 Taking Action for Wildlife

SPOTTED




Share your images with us
www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/record-sighting

Stoat – Waingroves Community Woodland

Photo: December 2020 © Mark Heyman



Speckled Wood Butterfly – Allestree

Photo: April 2021 © Steve Plant



Anthophora Plumipes – Carr Vale

Photo: April 2021 © Kieron Huston



Water Vole – Codnor Park Reservoir

Photo: March 2021 © Darren Roe



Green Hairstreak Butterfly – Hopton Quarry

Photo: April 2021 © Derek Brownlee



Earliest Eggs for Derby Famous Peregrines

Every year, roughly around Easter, all eyes are on the peregrine webcams, waiting for the first egg.

Well, in true 2021 style, things have been a little different. Peregrines have been nesting on the cathedral tower since 2006, with March 23rd being the earliest date for eggs before now. This year the eggs are way ahead of schedule on March 18th, catching us all by surprise!

Last year we lost our long-standing female and a new female moved into the famous nesting spot. She obviously likes to do things a little earlier!



Peregrine falcons are the world's fastest animal, reaching unbelievable speeds of up to 390kph. They love to nest in high places such as towers and cliff edges, anywhere where they can have a great vantage point for spotting and swooping down on prey.

And, even more good news, our famous Derby peregrine webcams are live once again, following two years off air. All thanks to Nick Moyes, Nick Brown and Derby City Council. <https://derbyperegrines.blogspot.com/p/our-webcams.html>

Beaver female with kits. Photo: © Mike Symes Devon Wildlife Trust



Dam' Good News for Derbyshire Beavers

We announced our plans last year to bring beavers back to Derbyshire. Due to the fantastic funds raised by our supporters, the £75,000 grant from Biffa Award and a total of £150,000 from Severn Trent, the Trust has been able to DOUBLE the size of the planned beaver enclosure at Willington from the 20 acres originally planned to now more than 40 hectares! Natural England – the government agency responsible

for licensing the release and homing of the beavers – has reviewed and licensed the plans, and agreed that the Willington Area is large enough for two beaver families.

This is fantastic news for Derbyshire's beavers but does mean that a lot of work is now underway preparing the much larger site. We hope that our two beaver families will be released in autumn this year!



Protecting British Badgers

The start of 2021 saw the government launch a consultation to discuss when they should stop issuing cull licences. They suggested 2022, we called for an end to them now. This is because each licence lasts four years, so if licences were to continue being issued until 2022, badger culling would remain until the end of 2025. Over 39,000 campaigned nationally with us and responded to the government consultation, unfortunately the government hasn't listened. On May 27th the government announced that it will continue to issue licenses to kill badgers over the next four years. To

date, over 140,000 badgers have been culled, this news will sadly put a further 130,000 animals at risk of being shot- taking the total to almost 300,000. The total badger population in England and Wales was estimated to be around 485,000 in 2017. This isn't over, we continue to oppose the badger cull and will continue delivering vaccination programmes and sharing the impacts. Thank you to all of you who have supported us. For more information please see: <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/news/government-approves-badger-culling-2026-and-ignores-public-consultation>

National Neonics Campaign

Earlier this year a pesticide known to kill bees has been authorised for farmers to use on sugar beet crops in England.

The deadly neonicotinoid ('neonic') called thiamethoxam was banned EU-wide in 2018 because of the widespread harm it causes. Even worse, the authorisation involves adding weedkiller nearby, on the basis that this will 'protect' bees. But this would further devastate precious wildflower habitats and the already endangered insects that depend on them.

Marbled White. Photo: © James Adler



Bee *Bombus pascuorum* on aster. Photo: © Rachel Scopes



Craig Bennett, chief executive of the Wildlife Trusts, says:

“Using neonicotinoids not only threatens bees but is also extremely harmful to aquatic wildlife because the majority of the pesticide leaches into soil and then into waterways. Worse still, farmers are being recommended to use weedkiller to kill wildflowers in and around sugar beet crops in a misguided attempt to prevent harm to bees in the surrounding area. This is a double blow for nature. Only 5% of this toxic neonicotinoid goes where it is wanted in the crop; most ends up in the soil where it can be absorbed by the roots of wildflowers, and also ends up in our rivers, potentially affecting other insects and wildlife.”

The Wildlife Trusts strongly oppose this decision and were shocked that the Secretary of State, George Eustice, has used his power to allow this. A petition was started and has had over 100,000 signatures to date.

The February's cold snap has meant this pesticide has been deemed unnecessary for use in 2021. But we have the weather to thank, not the government – the decision to allow the neonic must be overturned, as it can still be used in future years, and our campaign continues. See <https://action.wildlifetrusts.org/page/74049/data/1>



Peak District National Park

On the 70th anniversary of the Peak District National Park, Wildlife Trusts urgently request an ambitious Nature Recovery Plan.

Ben Carter – Director of Income Generation

This April the Peak District National Park celebrated its 70th anniversary. On this special anniversary the Wildlife Trust is calling on the government and the Peak District National Park Authority to commit to better protection for nature and wildlife.

The Peak District National Park is renowned for its beauty, and 13 million people visit every year. With majestic rivers, striking dales, magnificent moors and beautiful wooded valleys, the Peak District should be teeming with wildlife, abundant with wild animals and plants.

Tragically this is not the case. Biodiversity within the Peak District National Park is in decline, and this is the case for almost all our national parks.

In 2019 the government-commissioned Glover Review concluded that England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

(AONBs) are uniquely placed to drive nature's recovery, deliver nature-based solutions to the climate crisis and to connect people with nature.


It also found that these protected landscapes are falling a long way short of their potential.

Almost 18 months later, the government has yet to respond. In the meantime, nature has been offering hope and consolation to millions of us during the pandemic, whilst evidence shows that wildlife is continuing to decline and access to nature is unequal.

Action is needed now to tackle the main forces driving wildlife decline, including the burning of peatlands, intensive agriculture, water and air pollution, drainage, the illegal killing of protected wildlife, inappropriate forestry cover and the lack of native woodland.

Ten important changes to transform protected landscapes for the good of nature, climate and people were sent to the DEFRA Secretary of State in March this year.

Peak District National Park. Photo: © 2020 vision



These included delivery of nature-based solutions to climate change, connecting more people from all parts of society to nature, setting and reporting on clear nature recovery targets and giving protected landscapes the resources they need to deliver for nature, climate and people.

Jo Smith, CEO of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, which manages several important sites across the park, said: "We are facing a nature emergency – around half of UK wildlife has decreased since 1970, with 1 in 7 species now at risk of extinction. There is a need for better national oversight and support for our protected landscapes. As we head towards COP26 (the UN Climate Change Conference) in the UK in November, now is the perfect time for the

government and the National Park Authorities to step up and commit to ensuring our National Parks are better for wildlife."

The Trusts state that if the government took these reforms forward now, it would be showing strong global leadership ahead of the major international biodiversity and climate conferences later this year.

The milestone is a chance for real celebration – but also for reflection on how, moving forward, the government and the Park Authority can support landowners, businesses, local authorities and the public to ensure the Peak District National Park remains a great place for people, and becomes a brilliant space for nature and nature's recovery.





Peat in the Peak District THE BURNING QUESTION

There are so many hot (!) topics when it comes to the environment and our natural world that it is easy to get your head in a spin. Kaite Helps, Marketing Manager, explains:

What is peatland burning?

Peatland burning is not actually burning of peat, it's burning of the vegetation that grows on top of peat. This is usually heather or grasses, such as purple moor grass. It has been done traditionally to provide new growth of heather (for grouse) or grasses (for sheep).

I often come away feeling more confused than ever if I dive straight in with some of our conservation issues. So, with peatland burning becoming a topic of conversation for us at the Trust over the next few months I wanted to give a little background on the basics. Let's start at the beginning...

Where does peatland burning happen in Derbyshire?

North Derbyshire and the Peak District is where you are most likely to find peatland burning. Here it is done predominantly for grouse moor management. You'll also find peatland burning in the South Pennines, primarily for sheep grazing.



Why is peatland burning so bad?

Peatlands are wetlands. You'll also hear of blanket bogs - these are peat bogs (wetlands) on top of hills.

Burning creates a crust on the surface of peat which increases the speed of water flow across it. This reduces how much water the peat soaks up. If the peat isn't soaking up the amount of water it is supposed to, that water will run off the peatlands quickly, meaning faster flowing rivers and more water in those rivers.

Peatlands also store carbon, and they do that well when they are saturated with water rather than when drying out. Burning peatlands releases carbon which is bad news for climate change. It's not just burning that causes this - as peatland dries out, the peat begins to break down and old carbon is released. This is actually more damaging to the climate than the clouds of smoke (which are bad for air quality).



Why do people burn peatland?

As well as for land management for grouse and sheep, peat is burnt to create firebreaks. A bit of a catch-22. But summer wildfires are much more damaging than managed burning so they do need to be prevented.

Sadly, many managed fires become unmanaged wildfires so this needs to be done carefully.

What could be done instead of burning?

We'd love to see vegetation cutting as an alternative to burning to create firebreaks and new areas of heather growth.

Part of the issue is that there is a misunderstanding over what grouse need. It's widely believed that if there is more heather on the peatlands then there will be more grouse. That is the case until you get to about 50% heather; beyond that it doesn't make any difference. Grouse also eat cotton grass and insects, both of which do well on wetter blanket bogs.

There is a huge project to restore Derbyshire's peatlands called Moors for the Future. They are working hard to cover as much of the peatland with Sphagnum moss. The moss keeps the peat wet and therefore reduces the chances of wildfires. This is the way forward.

Staffordshire The Roaches wildfire. Photo: © Rod Kirkpatrick F Stop Press



A VISION FOR A WILD PEAK

– A Case for Eco-Tourism



Dave Savage, Regional Manager (Dark and White Peak)

Those of us who are fortunate enough to live in Derbyshire are blessed with some of the most picturesque countryside in the country. The home of the first national park in England, Derbyshire has rolling green hills, wooded valleys and high moorlands, a variety of habitats rarely found in one place. The Peak District also contains some of the most wildlife-depleted parts of the country. The predominant industry in the region is farming, and the intensive approach to agriculture and overgrazing of our landscape has contributed to the biodiversity crisis.

The Wild Peak program is an ambitious attempt to begin the reverse of this decline. Wild Peak will look at alternatives to current management practices, in the Dark Peak in particular, to investigate models where landowners can still make their land pay. Wild Peak will investigate five areas over the next 12 months:

- Development of a vision for the Wild Peak, working with local communities
- Opportunity mapping and gap analysis of rewilding in the Dark Peak – what is already good and where are the opportunities for rewilding projects and habitat improvements?
- Moving to a nature-based economy – how can farm businesses manage their land in a different, more nature-friendly way but still get a good income?
- Re-introduction assessments – what species can we bring back? Pine marten, red squirrel, bison?
- Rewilding Ladybower – with our sites at Thornhill and Ladybower being managed in a nature-led way, how will we influence other land owners in the valley to do the same?

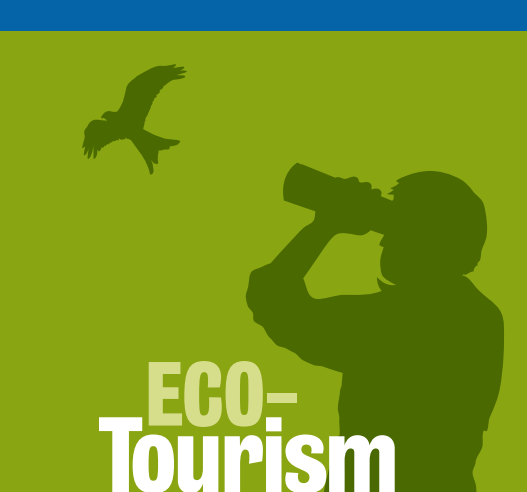
Ladybower, White Peak



Turtle Dove - Photo: © Dawn Monrose

The long-term aim of Wild Peak will be to build a big enough movement in the region in support of nature-led solutions to managing the landscape. Nature-led solutions allow wildlife to lead on the management of habitats. For example, at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust we have managed our nature reserves with the help of volunteers

removing willow from wetlands. Our nature-led solution to this is to introduce beavers who will do this work and make wide-ranging habitat improvements. Wild Peak will encourage other similar solutions across the region: could bison manage woodland in the Upper Derwent Valley?



20 million people live within one hour of the Peak District, with 13.25 million people visiting annually. Many of these visitors are attracted to the same 'honey pots' like Chatsworth, Castleton, Bakewell and Mam Tor. Increasing these numbers would potentially have a significant impact on these places.

One idea is to spread these visitors out to more areas in the park, and increase the amount of time they spend there through eco-tourism. This would get more people visiting from a

further afield using more facilities like bed and breakfasts, cafes and shops. It would bring more income to the region, allowing investment in our natural resources.

Eco-tourism, simply put, is where people visit a place specifically for the wildlife found there, a bit like African safaris. There are a number of amazing examples of where this has been successful that could be easily applied to Derbyshire.

Knepp is a 3,500 acre estate just south of Horsham, West Sussex. Since 2001, the land, which was once intensively farmed, has been devoted to a pioneering rewilding project. Using grazing animals as the drivers of habitat creation, the project has seen extraordinary increases in wildlife. Extremely rare species like turtle doves, nightingales, peregrine falcons and purple emperor butterflies are now breeding there, and populations of more common species are rocketing.

Knepp has attracted thousands of visitors per year who go to experience the iconic British wildlife there. There are a number of different places to stay, from camping in the woods or fields, to glamping pods (see pictures). I had the great pleasure in 2019 of being kept awake until the early hours of the morning by singing nightingales next to my tent. Magic!

The reintroduction of white-tailed eagles to Mull in Scotland has been estimated to inject around £1.7 million per year into the local economy. Mull Eagle Watch provides tours for families to experience these iconic birds that were reintroduced in 1985. The company prides itself on being a sustainable 'Green Tourism' business and has been awarded a Gold Medal from the Scottish tourist board for its approach to protecting the countryside.

A great example from Europe shows that beavers are a big attraction for wildlife watchers. Beavers were introduced to the Klosterheden Forest in Denmark in 1999, and organised tours to see beavers attract over 2000 people per year.

A marketing campaign combining "Beavers, Beer and Castles" in the Belgian Ardennes following the reintroduction of beavers to Belgium in the late 1990s has resulted in beaver-watching holidays being advertised worldwide.

These examples have shown that people and wildlife can co-exist. Wildlife has thrived despite increased visitor numbers in all cases; it is only by bringing people closer to nature that they come to value it. Any new scheme would need to be delivered through a robust engagement program to educate visitors on behaving appropriately.

Many of these examples could be applied to the Peak District. Whilst white-tailed sea eagles wouldn't be appropriate, we have osprey crossing Derbyshire all the time. We already have hen harrier, merlin, red kite and other birds of prey that just need better protection. Eco-tourism wouldn't be appropriate for all landowners, but once those brave first few make the leap we could see our landscape transformed.



Better for Nature
Wild Peak



DOWN on the FARM

How farming has affected our bird populations

Nick Brown
Wildlife Enquiries Officer

Farmland covers by far the greatest area of the county apart from the moorland. From my own back garden not far from Derby, I can see permanent grass fields with sheep and one field that is cut for silage in May and which then has cattle put on as the grass regrows.

When we first moved here, each spring there were curlews bubbling away, clearly audible from the garden. I recorded the dates they returned each spring. No longer.

Now the nearest curlews are many miles away and very few and far between too.

As a young bird watcher I remember seeing lapwings and hearing skylarks singing almost wherever I went in the countryside. Again, no longer. And I can't remember the last time I saw a grey partridge, a corn bunting or a turtle dove!

These anecdotal impressions of loss of farmland birds are backed up by the hard facts gleaned from detailed and careful survey work. Of nineteen bird species which rely on farms to breed, most have declined severely.



SkyLark. Photo: © Stefan Johansson

Curlew. Photo: © 2020 vision

Tree sparrows have declined by 94%, corn buntings by 90%, turtle doves by 89% and grey partridges by 87%. Staggering declines.

Species that have declined by over 50% include yellow wagtails (73%), starlings (68%), linnets (58%), lapwings (58%), yellowhammers (54%) and those wonderful skylarks (51%).

These losses hurt. They have crept up on us all over the last 40 years with the most severe declines happening in the 80s and 90s.

So, what are the causes?

Firstly farming has changed. Small mixed farms with rotated crops and both sheep and cattle are largely gone, replaced by very simplified farming systems and much earlier cutting for silage rather than a late cut for hay.

Silage cutting begins in May and any ground-nesting birds fail as a result. Their eggs are broken, their chicks mangled by the machinery.

There has been a marked increase in the use of pesticides – everything that might damage the crops is treated. There are fungicides, molluscicides, insecticides and herbicides. Some fields have twenty applications in a single growing season. No wonder there is nothing for the adult birds to eat, let alone for their chicks!



Starling. Photo: © Mark Robinson

Predation may also be a factor though the jury is out about the extent to which it plays a part (even sheep have been seen eating curlew and lapwing eggs!).

In addition, the land has been simplified and fields have become larger. Ponds and damp areas have been filled in, and field margins reduced such that crops are grown right up to field boundaries.

Nowadays you rarely find winter stubbles. As soon as crops are harvested, autumn sown cereals are planted.

Maize fields are left open to erosion through the winter and just as lapwings are drawn to them as suitable for nesting, a new crop is sown and the nests are destroyed.

But it really doesn't have to be like that.

Over a twenty year period, the RSPB's Hope Farm in Cambridgeshire has shown how farming with wildlife as a core feature can still produce a healthy profit and show very significant increases in bird populations.



Corn Bunting. Photo: © 2020 vision

Of course, farmers are often simply responding to the incentives and pressures put on them – for example by the EU's system of farm subsidies and payments.

With the UK having left the EU, all that is about to change. The new ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) looked very good initially but now seems destined to be severely watered down.

The Agriculture Bill, which came before parliament in April, also looks at the time of writing as if it will be steered away from measures that would really support nature-friendly farming.

This government must seize the chance to incentivise farmers to change their farm practices in a direction which looks after nature rather than continuing to annihilate it. By the time this article appears in print, many decisions will have been made.

We must hope they are the right ones or we will lose another decade, by which time many of our cherished farmland species may have been lost forever.

Further reading:



www.farmwildlife.info – a partnership of organisations giving advice to farmers.

www.nffn.org.uk – the website for nature-friendly farmers of which there are a growing number.

New research shows that at least £3 billion is needed for nature-friendly farming | The Wildlife Trusts

Tree Sparrow. Photo: © Mike Snelle





Mowing time in the meadows

FARMING for Wildlife

Better for Nature
Farming for Wildlife

Sarah Frith Ecologist

Farmland is cultivated land for producing food; it is a business and an industry, in the sense that goods must be produced and profit made. Is 'farming for wildlife' then a contradiction in terms? Hopefully not, as since the 1940s farm policy and subsidies have been all about producing food, and as a result habitats were lost and wildlife suffered.

There are really two approaches to wildlife-friendly farming – 'land sparing' and whole-farm wildlife-friendly farming.

Land sparing is the putting aside a bit of superfluous land for conservation. Conservation and food production are separated with this approach: corners of hay-meadows may be left un-mown, areas of cereal fields not sprayed with the rest of the field, a pond dug in an otherwise intensively-managed field, and so on. I feel passionately that farming can and should be a balance, not a nod to conservation on 5% or 10% of an intensively managed farm.

We invited Sarah and James Frith, who run a 75 acres (30 hectares) farm to tell us more.

Ravensnest Cottage Farm is based near Ashover with a separate block of rented land at Birchover, and the entire farm is managed with conservation in mind.

It is a working farm with around 30 hectares of grassland and with a small herd of pedigree Belted Galloway cattle, which are either sold as breeding stock or for their beef. They are a hardy native breed, living outside all year and thriving on rough forage. They are also very good mums, giving birth out in the fields, usually with no problems at all. There are plenty of small family farms run on the same agricultural model but the difference is that we do all we can to encourage wildlife on the farm. This isn't on separate areas or fenced field corners; we treat every part of the farm as wildlife habitat. We are also registered organic, so use no artificial fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides of any kind, ever.

Hedgerows are important for wildlife, but if they surround intensively managed silage fields heavily spread with slurry, cut three times a year and not an insect or bird in sight then what is the point? What use is a nice picture frame with no picture?

How do you farm for wildlife?

We are a purely grassland farm and our conservation efforts are concentrated on the fields themselves. Two of our fields (on land we rent at Birchover) are ancient species-rich meadows that set the 'gold standard' and have a colourful array of traditional meadow flowers, including common spotted orchid, ox-eye daisy, common knapweed, great burnet, betony, rough hawkbit and tufted vetch. We are trying to bring the rest of the farm up to that quality. All the hay meadows are cut late in summer, when the grasses and wildflowers have flowered and set seed. The mowing and drying process helps drop the seeds and ensure they can grow next year.

We use no fertilizer inputs at all, as this would encourage the grasses at the expense of the smaller, slower-growing herbs. In 10 years we have increased the species in some fields from just ryegrass and white clover to almost 40 native, traditional meadow herbs.





The summer meadows are colourful, beautiful – and alive!

To speed up the process, we collected seed by brush-harvester from one of the best, most species-rich meadows to scatter on another, which has been a great success. It is important to graze the meadows after they have been mown to help keep vigorous grasses in check and also to open up small bare areas of soil to aid germination. Along with increasing the number of wildflowers, there are other results, notably an increase in insects, especially butterflies and grasshoppers. We even had a rare cricket called the Roesel's bush cricket, a new arrival in this part of Derbyshire.

We leave wide un-cut margins to all the meadows, for different plants can thrive, and as a hunting habitat for barn owls.

The pastures similarly receive no inputs of fertiliser, and are grazed in careful rotation depending on conditions all year round. By altering the timing of grazing on one field we were delighted to see a carpet of bluebells spreading out from the woods, which had not been allowed to flower before we took on the land.

We have planted hedges, now thriving and providing a fantastic nesting habitat and shelter for birds such as dunnock, robin, blackcap and song thrush, and providing berries and nuts to see birds through the winter as well as nectar for invertebrates all summer. We were delighted to find one dunnock's nest near to our cottage and surprised it had been made with scavenged fur from our pony and tinsel from our Christmas tree!

We have several traditional drystone walls on the farm, providing a habitat for over-wintering lizards, newts and toads as well as being a useful windbreak for the cattle to shelter behind. We have restored some of these as they were becoming derelict.

We have areas of scrub, which, particularly as a mosaic with tussocky grassland, is an important habitat for a range of wildlife, including birds and invertebrates. We want to keep a varied structure with different ages of scrub and open areas of tussocky grassland, tall plants like hogweed and cow parsley, as well as brambles. I have never heard so much birdsong as when I walk through the scrub on our Birchover land on a spring day. When the migrant warblers arrive you can hear chiff chaff, willow warbler, garden warbler, blackcap, whitethroat, and our own resident species, including dunnock, robin and song thrush.

The key to all the work we do for wildlife is knowing and understanding what you've already got, and not having pre-conceived ideas. We make sure we are doing the best we can to accommodate wildlife, especially when new things turn up. We then find out what they need and do our best to provide it.

A newly rebuilt wall – a skilled waller at work



Spring blossom with small tortoiseshell butterfly

What support do you get?

We are in a Countryside Stewardship Scheme, within their Higher Tier, which demands a high level of commitment to conservation, but is a much-needed financial support, giving us grant-aid towards capital works such as wall rebuilding, as well as annual payments for doing the conservation management on the land. It also supports us to have visits from the local primary school, as we feel very strongly about the importance of educating the next generation about wildlife. The children have a lot of fun and do pond dipping, learn the names of trees and flowers, catch grasshoppers (gently!) and get close up to the cattle.

What is the best thing about farming for wildlife?

The unexpected things. For instance, for several weeks at the end of summer if you look at our haymeadows there will be 40 or 50 swallows skimming across the fields at knee height, feeding on insects, fuelling up for their long journey back to Africa each September. Our neighbour's sprayed and slurried silage field adjacent has not a single bird. I feel that the whole farm is contributing to something as huge as that autumn migration.

Oh, and on a rare afternoon off, being able to picnic amongst your own bluebells!



What do you like least about farming?

TB (tuberculosis) testing – at intervals, all cattle must be tested by law. If we can get a Covid vaccine in 12 months, if the will was there we could get a vaccination programme going for TB, vaccinate every cow and stop the senseless slaughter of cattle and badgers. As it is we have to go through a lot of additional labour and stress to go through the test every 6 or 12 months.

And finally, what do you like to do when you are not farming?

Grow vegetables in the garden.

The Belted Galloway cattle help with the conservation management by eating rough vegetation and thriving out on the fields all year round. They all have names – could you tell them apart?





Natural FLOOD Management

Dr Scott McKenzie
Living Rivers Programme Manager

It's easy to look at a river and see it as an isolated entity – after all, it's wet and has its own ecology and its own niche species. However, how the surrounding land is managed plays a huge role in the health of our rivers. The land and water are two sides of the same coin, yin and yang, Reeves and Mortimer – and sometimes, unfortunately, Jekyll and Hyde. Good farming practices are, therefore, essential to ensure a clean, biodiverse river, and here at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust we're working with farmers to help that happen.

Historically, agricultural practices have caused overwhelming damage to our waterways. Many rivers and streams have been straightened and disconnected from their floodplain to provide more usable land for grazing and crops. Land drains have been installed to dry the fields, again increasing their suitability for farming; and lethal chemicals have been applied that find their way into the watercourses, causing significant ecological damage. Thankfully, over the years, research, evidence and policy changes have led to modifications in farming practices. These changes have helped wildlife and water quality to bounce back, but there is still a way to go.



A simple way to think about land management is in terms of roughness. The “rougher” the landscape, the more it will protect the watercourses. Smooth landscapes, whether it's heavily grazed pasture, or a ploughed arable field will cause quicker surface run-off and take with it many undesirables. Perhaps the biggest benefit to a “rough” landscape is its impact on

flood reduction. These rougher habitats intercept more water and extend the time between peak rainfall and maximum river water levels, therefore reducing flood risk downstream. This is known as natural flood management – working with natural processes to prevent flooding. Farmers and landowners therefore play a key role in reducing flooding across a catchment.

The vast majority of landowners and farmers manage their land well, but it only takes one or two farms to cause issues that affect the entire catchment – undoing the good work done by their neighbours. There are some simple tweaks to land management practices that landowners and farmers can make to help improve water quality – starting with giving the river a bit of breathing space! Buffer strips are a great way of protecting the river from livestock and surface run-off. Fencing off the river and leaving a few metres where thicker vegetation can become established means that banks are less susceptible to erosion. The plants also intercept nutrients, sediment and chemicals that are washed off the land – all of which would otherwise reduce water quality. It's amazing what a dramatic difference just fencing a river can make to water quality – and biodiversity.

Tree planting along rivers also provides that additional vital buffer. Their roots help stitch the bank together, and any that venture into the water provide habitat for fish and invertebrates to hide in. Their shade can help cool rivers down – which is important to maintain high dissolved oxygen levels. Their cover can not only provide a safe area for fish away from predators, but also provide a perch for hunting kingfisher – every

photographers favourite, surely?! Tree planting in the floodplain also creates valuable wet woodland habitat – again one that has been widely lost from Derbyshire – and will support species, including willow tit. Balance is vital. Too many trees along a narrow river can cause excessive shading and reduce marginal and channel vegetation cover – important for species such as water vole and many emerging insects. Having a landscape that comprises a mosaic of different habitats and ground cover types ensures maximum biodiversity gains.

Most farmers reduce the amount of bare soil open to the elements during the winter. They do this by reducing the extent of ploughing, sowing cover crops, or allowing over winter stubble – all of which prevent soil from entering the river. However, some rivers still end up looking like chocolate milkshake – full of soil – and indicative of poor land management. Keeping soil and nutrients out of the river is not only beneficial from a water quality aspect – but it also helps the farm business. It means farmers reduce their reliance on expensive fertilisers – so there are economic and ecological advantages to good land management.



The balance between land management and water management still isn't quite right – and one of the biggest challenges we face is that of floodplain reconnection. Over the years levees have been created to make riverbanks higher and prevent floodwater flowing onto the surrounding farmland. Consequently we have lost the vast majority of floodplain meadows – and their associated biodiversity. It has also increased flooding downstream. By reconnecting the river with its floodplain you not only help reduce urban flooding but you will also provide additional habitat for a number of protected and declining species, such as many wading birds and wetland plants.

Currently there are no financial incentives to allow farmers and landowners to flood their land or compensate for the associated clean-up (the receding floodwater can leave behind a lot of rubbish from upstream). Hopefully the new Environmental Land Management Schemes will provide a mechanism to help farmers create a better link between land and water – that will not only help reduce flood risk but increase biodiversity.

Rivers act as wonderful “blue corridors”, connecting habitats across the landscape and allowing species to move freely between them.

Ensuring the riparian habitat (the habitats along the river bank) are diverse is important for them to act also as “green corridors” – helping a range of terrestrial species too. Improving these river corridor and floodplain habitats is essential if we are to create a more connected landscape, and this is why landowners and farmers will play a critical role in ensuring Nature's Recovery and the establishing of effective Nature Recovery Networks.

What can you do to help?

If you are a landowner and would like advice on how you could improve any watercourses that run through your land, then get in touch and we can come out and provide advice and assistance.

However, if you don't have any streams running through your land/garden, you can help answer a simple question: is your local river brown after rainfall? If so, let us know so we can work with surrounding landowners to make improvements.



Email us at livingrivers@derbyshirewt.co.uk for more information.





BRITISH HEDGEHOG Preservation Society

The hedgehog was voted Britain's Favourite Wild Mammal, but despite that it is in trouble, and hedgehog numbers have been declining for many years. We have invited the British Hedgehog Preservation Society to tell us more about our prickly friends.

The decline of our hedgehogs is so bad that they have recently been classified as "Vulnerable to Extinction". They are often referred to as the "gardener's friend" and most of us are thrilled to spot one in the garden, but it's becoming an increasingly rare sight.

The problem is that hedgehogs are finding it harder to track down a good place to live and

enough food to eat. In the countryside, larger farms have fewer hedges, meaning fewer nesting sites for hedgehogs. Crops are sprayed with pesticides killing the hedgehogs' food – bugs, worms and grubs. In towns people have been boxing in their gardens with fences, blocking access for hedgehogs. Because hedgehogs travel around a mile in a night, it's important that they have lots of joined up gardens to use.

Hedgehogs are a good 'indicator' species. If hedgehogs are in trouble it raises concerns about other species and the environment in general. If we take action to improve things for hedgehogs, we will be helping lots of other wildlife too.

BUT it's not all doom and gloom! There are lots of ways we can help! Here's a few ideas:

- Create 13cm x 13cm square gaps in your boundary fence as a 'hedgehog highway' and ask your neighbours to do the same. The more gardens you can connect the better. Log your hedgehog highways (and your hedgehog sightings) on the Big Hedgehog Map: <https://bighedgehogmap.org/>
- Offer meaty hedgehog, cat or dog food, or some cat biscuits alongside a bowl of water at night.
- Make your garden wildlife friendly – avoid using slug pellets or pesticides and leave one corner "a bit wild" – all sorts of wildlife will appreciate your efforts, not just hedgehogs!
- Create a log pile in your garden, this will provide natural shelter and food – don't disturb it. Or consider putting out a hedgehog house.
- Ask everyone you know to check for hedgehogs before strimming or mowing. Check compost heaps before sticking a big fork in there too!
- If you've got a pond, make sure hedgehogs can get out if they fall in. Ideally create sloping edges, or failing that provide ramps or steps up.
- Put up a display of posters at your local garden centre, shop, school, etc. – the British Hedgehog Preservation Society can supply poster packs for free or they can be downloaded from their website: www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk
- When we get near Bonfire Night ask your local council to "think hedgehog" before lighting a public bonfire. If possible get them to build the bonfire the day it's going to be lit, or failing that, check carefully under it first before lighting and only light from one side.
- Why not become a Hedgehog Champion? Hedgehog Street is run by BHPS in partnership with the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES). Just go to <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/> and sign up – it's fun and free to join!



All of the above are great proactive ways of helping hedgehogs and hopefully you'll be rewarded by seeing happy, healthy hedgehogs out at night. BUT if you do see any hedgehogs out during the day and they are looking lethargic, wobbly, injured or covered in flies, then they need your help. Get them into a big deep box (they are very good at escaping smaller boxes) and indoors and away from flies. Keep them somewhere calm and quiet until you can get them some help. Give them an old towel or similar and ideally a warm wrapped hot water bottle – you need enough space in the box so that they have room to get off if they get too hot. Offer them a small amount of meaty cat, dog or hedgehog food and water (don't force feed). Call the British Hedgehog Preservation Society on **01584 890801** for the contact details of your nearest hedgehog rescue.



**British Hedgehog
Preservation Society**



I vote for WILDLIFE

It's more important than ever to see wildlife and nature's recovery at the top of the political agenda. Kaite Helps takes a look at how we're making sure this happens locally.

May, spring is in full bloom, bees busy amongst the flowers and blue skies a regular occurrence – and, it's time for Local Elections (again!). At the Trust we've been working for over 60 years to create a better, wilder Derbyshire, but the next 10 years are critical. We recently highlighted that we need at least 33% of Derbyshire to be connected and protected for nature by 2030. Making more space for nature to become abundant once again will give our struggling wildlife, wild places and the people of Derbyshire the chance to recover.

33% is the bare minimum that nature needs to start recovering.

But we can't do this without the support of our local and national government – so at every opportunity we remind them that they need to make sure that nature's recovery is at the top of the agenda.

Why do we ask?

Well, in Derbyshire (and nationally) we're witnessing devastating losses. Our moorlands are burnt, producing huge amounts of carbon, contributing to climate change. Our national

park isn't as good for wildlife as it should be. We see flooding each year which could be solved with natural solutions such as beavers and more wetlands. Our road verges are bare when they could be bursting with wildflowers, bees and butterflies and huge opportunities are being missed to restore Derbyshire's quarries for wildlife. People are losing their local green spaces, their mental and physical health is suffering and they are becoming more and more disconnected from nature.

These issues will continue to gather pace but it doesn't have to be this way.

What do we ask?

With local elections there are always a lot of candidates – and a lot of political priorities. On this occasion there was also a vote for Derbyshire's latest Police Crime Commissioner. So to cut through the noise we wrote a Manifesto for Wildlife. A one stop shop for anyone to learn about the issues we're facing, what our vision for a wilder Derbyshire is, and what we need to happen to see positive change.

In it we set five pledges that we asked every candidate to commit to:

- 1 Champion the recovery of nature**
– help us ensure 33% of Derbyshire is connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030 by providing resources and funding to deliver a Nature Recovery Network.
- 2 Prioritise local solutions to the global climate and nature crisis**
– drive investment in carbon capture in woodlands, wetland and peatlands and invest in nature-based solutions to climate challenges like flooding and pollution.
- 3 Back natural health and wellbeing**
– by supporting Green Prescribing programmes and Wild Wellbeing initiatives, as well as ensuring everyone benefits from accessible local green spaces where nature thrives.
- 4 Ensure development that is good for people and for nature**
– by protecting valuable wild spaces from destruction and making sure all developments create net gain for nature.
- 5 Support innovative approaches to boosting the green economy**
– by investing in training and job creation for the growing green economy, backing nature-based tourism, and rewilding depleted land.

We also asked you, our supporters, to contact your local candidates to highlight the issues and encourage them to pledge their support. We did the same, inviting them to let us know which ones they would honour – each response was posted on our website.

This type of visibility is important. It means you and I have an opportunity to see which candidates value the natural world as much as we do ahead of voting. Also, if their pledge is public, once elected, we hope they are more likely to stick to it!

So, what does it mean for Derbyshire?

If the elected councillors stick to their pledges and truly prioritise nature it could have a huge effect on how successful our work, and that of other environmental organisations across Derbyshire, is.

We would see the restoration of moorlands for carbon capture. The reintroduction of beavers, as well as work to create and enhance wetlands in the region to mitigate against flooding.

There will be a Nature Recovery Network across Derbyshire, so wildlife can move freely across our county. And, perhaps most importantly, wild

wellbeing initiatives to ensure everyone has access to high quality local wild places so people can reconnect with nature, and feel happier and healthier as a result.

These are just a few examples of how support for these pledges can transform Derbyshire into a wilder, better place for people and wildlife.

Let's keep the pressure on

Conservative, Green, Labour and Lib Dems all pledged their support, and faster than in previous years. Showing our voice is getting louder and they are listening.

Now we need them to stick to their pledges whilst they are in power. It's vital to nature's recovery.

We can only achieve the change needed for nature if we all work together. From local councillors, Police Crime Commissioners, Mayors, local authorities, landowners and businesses. We all have a part to play in nature's recovery.

The next 10 years are critical.

To read more about The Wildlife Trust's 30 by 30 campaign, visit:

www.wildlifetrusts.org/30-30-30



Taking ACTION for Wildlife

With a nature and a climate crisis happening right in front of us, it can often feel overwhelming at times to figure out what we as individuals can do to help. Lockdown has shown how important nature is to us all, how it can help bring calm and presence when the world feels like it is going crazy. Small actions can bring about big changes.

Kayleigh Wight, Working for Nature trainee, shared how one simple action she created in her back garden helped nature and in return helped her.

Here is her story.

Kayleigh Wright Working for Nature Trainee

I've always had a fascination with frogs, and on a recent walk along my local nature trail I came across an abundance of them swimming in the water below the woodland banks. It brought me back to last year when I had decided I wanted to build something for wildlife in the back garden, and a pond was exactly what I had in mind.

I had been finding the lockdown really difficult and I had decided that I wanted to do something for myself whilst helping wildlife. After seeing plenty of ideas on BBC Springwatch and Gardener's World, I decided to have a go at building myself a pond.

We have a small garden and so I was up for the challenge to find the best way to fit a pond into the garden. My mum suggested I could create a raised pond, rather than digging it into the ground and whilst researching I came across plenty of guides created by the Wildlife Trust, RSPB and many other organisations for creating a raised mini pond. I didn't have anything suitable at home for a container, so I purchased an inexpensive half-barrel online. I then gathered pond plants from my local garden centre such as an oxygenator to be completely submerged under water to help keep the water clear, some marginal plants that provide cover and perches for wildlife and a floating plant that provides shade to the pond. I also collected some materials around the garden such as stones, rocks and bricks to add shelving to my pond.



I chose a part shade/part sun location for my pond, to sit in the flower border amongst large shrubs and plants that would provide cover around the pond. After placing my barrel in its new spot, I filled the bottom with a layer of small stones and placed bricks on top of one another to create shelving for the marginal plants. On top of another brick I placed a large, flat rock to create a landing place for birds to bathe and for wildlife to get in and out of the pond. I also placed a number of rocks and logs around the outside of the pond to create stepping stones for wildlife. The last thing left was to fill up the pond with water, which I got from the tap outside.

A week after building the pond, I was thrilled to see a frog, hiding amongst the marginal plants. We also spotted dragonflies hovering over the water, and birds swooped down to drink and bathe. It was such a great feeling, seeing wildlife coming to visit my pond. It's still thriving today: the water forget-me-nots have started to bloom and new iris shoots are appearing. Since adding a pond to the garden, I've seen so much more wildlife visit than ever before.

To build a mini pond in the garden, you will need:

- 1 A watertight container. This could be a large plant pot, or even an old washing up bowl
- 2 Stones, rocks, bricks and logs
- 3 A few native pond plants, including an oxygenator and marginal plants



If you have been inspired by Kayleigh's story then follow her on social @KayleighAWright or take part in an action that could bring wildlife to your home. Visit <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wild-home>

[derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wild-home](https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wild-home)

In memory of

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of George Challenger.

George was a committed conservationist and was involved with the management of Millers Dale Quarry for almost 50 years.

George led monthly volunteer work parties every winter for over 30 years from 1973 to until 2007. He welcomed everyone who came along and his work ensured that the wonderful array of flowers that can be found on the reserve flourish to this day.



George Challenger

To read more: <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/celebrating-life-george-challenger>

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Mary Bayntun.

Mary became the West Derby Group chair in 1989, holding the position for several years before taking over the role of secretary, a position she held until her death last month.

She has always shown a great and unceasing interest in all forms of wildlife, especially birds.

Mary was a very active and enthusiastic member of the local community, and is and will be very much missed.

To read more: <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/celebrating-life-mary-bayntun>



Mary Bayntun

Working together for wildlife

50/50 Club winners

Congratulations to recent winners!

Mr John Green, Heather Davies, Jackie and Alistair Blackett, Muriel Moore, Pete Bryce, Pamela Riddle, Miss Alison Robbins, John Hills, Mrs Karen E Gowing, Mrs D P Hollingsworth, Peter Date, Anne and Geoffrey Pook

Feeling lucky?

The Wild Dreams 50/50 club raises funds which will be paid to a Landfill Operator to release Landfill Communities Fund monies for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. Please note that these funds are not eligible for Gift Aid. The funds could generate 10 times their worth.

To join at just £12 per year please fill out the form below and send a cheque (made payable to Wild Dreams) to the Trust office or complete our online form at:

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/raffles-and-clubs

Name (s)

Address

.....

Telephone number Email address

Number of subscriptions at £12 each Total amount enclosed

KICKSTART SCHEME

Here at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust we believe that there should be fair access to nature. We want to encourage more people than ever to be connected to nature to ensure Nature's Recovery. This is why we are committed to supporting and advocating for the progression, aspirations and the development of young people within the environmental sector. We want to support more young people in starting and establishing a career within the sector. We hope in doing so we can also tackle a growing demand for skills of all types within the sector as we face a climate emergency. We want to be part of a greener and healthier economy.

Therefore, we are proudly taking part in the Kickstart Scheme.

The Kickstart Scheme is a government initiative that allows employers to create six-month long paid work placements for 16 to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment. We have therefore created wide and diverse six-month placement roles within our teams. We know the added value the scheme can bring to our organisation.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Kickstart Scheme and upcoming placements you can get in contact with our Kickstart Project and Placement Manager, Flavia Ojok fojok@derbyshirewt.co.uk



Working in PARTNERSHIP

We work with businesses across all our living landscapes in different ways, from supporting the delivery of community projects to managing land for wildlife, with a lot going on in between! We love working with all our Corporate Partners as we believe that together we can enable a greener recovery for Derbyshire.



If your business would like to get involved, please get in touch on: enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk



We are proud to be working in partnership with:

Absolute Networks Ltd
Accrofab
AECOM
Aggregate Industries Ltd
Alpkit
Andrew Towler Associates
Ashbourne Heights Holiday Park
BASF
Big Wild Thought
Blackfish Group
Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd
Breedon Group Ltd
Buxton & High Peak Security Services Ltd
Buxton Brewery Co Ltd
Castle Cliffe
Catandra Industrial Consulting Ltd
Cemex Operations Ltd
Commercial Estates Group Ltd
Eagle Securities
East Midlands Airport (MAG)
East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire)

East Midlands Railway
Environment Agency
EP Industries Ltd
EPC United Kingdom Plc
Experian
G F Tomlinson Group Ltd
Granger's International Ltd
Green Metals UK Ltd
Henry Boot Plc
Hoe Grange Holidays
Holiday Cottages.co.uk
Horsley Lodge Ltd
HSBC
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J.C. Balls & Sons Ltd
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Marks & Spencer
NAL Plant Hire
Nestle Waters

Network Rail
Peak Holiday Cottages
Platinum Electrical Ltd
RSK Adas Ltd
Scarsdale Vets
Studio 10 Kitchen Design
Tarmac
Tec-Ties Ltd
The Loaf
Timms Solicitors
Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd
University of Derby
Vine House Farm
Virgin Media – Sheffield
Visit Peak District and Derbyshire
Ward Recycling
Weleda UK
White Peak Distillery
Wienerberger Ltd



**Saturday 25th
September 2021**
Woodside Farm,
ShIPLEY, DE75 7JL

Notification of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's 59th Annual General Meeting

We are happy to notify you that our Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 25th September at 2pm at Woodside Farm. Below is a brief agenda of what can be expected.

As well as the formal AGM proceedings we hope to run a series of walks, talks and activities. More details will be provided nearer the time.

Agenda

1. 14:00 Apologies for absence
2. Welcome and introductions
3. Achievements and future plans
4. Approval of previous AGM minutes Previous AGM minutes held on Saturday 12th December 2020
5. Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021 Annual Report & Financial Accounts 2021
6. Re-Appointment of BHP Chartered Accountants as the Trust's auditors for the year ending 31st March 2022
7. Election of committee
8. Any Other Business – Question and Answer session



To register your interest:

Please register your interest in this event here: <https://bit.ly/34ymIHe>
So we can ensure you receive all relevant updates relating to the AGM and associated events.

Further information will be shared on our website and to those that have registered their interest nearer the time. www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

If you require information to be provided to you via post please call 01773 881188



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

Leave a gift FOR NATURE

“A legacy to your local Wildlife Trust is a very special gift that can do remarkable things to help the wildlife treasures on your doorstep.”

Sir David Attenborough

After providing for your loved ones, please remember the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. When you are ready, we are here to talk.

01773 881188
enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk
www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

