Take a closer look at the natural history and varied wildlife and habitats of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.
Our Wildlife Training Workshops offer a friendly atmosphere where you can expand your knowledge of the special wildlife right on your doorstep. Learn from knowledgeable and enthusiastic local naturalists and develop your natural history skills with a group of like-minded people.

In 2023, our programme returns with a mixture of online, some with optional outdoor sessions, and face-to-face workshops across our three counties. For more detailed information, prices and to book your place, please visit our website: wildlifebcn.org/workshops

If you can’t or would prefer not to book online, please contact Juliette Butler, Training Workshops Officer on 07793 606026 or email trainingworkshops@wildlifebcn.org

KEY
B - Bedfordshire
C - Cambridgeshire
N - Northamptonshire
O - Online

Invertebrates
Botany
Lower Plants
Vertebrates
Practical Skills
Habitat Management
Basic Ecology Skills

Introduction to Raptor Identification with Henry Stanier
Raptors are a fascinating group of birds and the Great Fen is a great place to see them, especially in winter. This is a beginner’s guide to learn more about where and when to see them, and how to identify them, perched and in flight. There is also an optional visit to the Great Fen reserve where 1-1 guidance on identification will be given.

Wed 11 Jan, 7pm-9pm, online
Sat 14 Jan, 1.30-4.30pm, Great Fen

Introduction to Winter Tree Identification with Matt Hamilton
A workshop to help participants identify common, native broadleaved deciduous and, if found, exotic trees in winter using key characteristics. Types of trees and their associations helps with a better understanding of your local nature reserves.

Sat 21 Jan, 10am-4pm, Cambourne

Spoon Carving with Mark Ricketts
Learn to carve spoons from green (unseasoned) wood using traditional axe and knife techniques. No previous experience is necessary, and the course is suitable for complete beginners.

Sat 4 OR Sun 5 Feb – 10am-5pm, Cambourne
Introduction to Biological Recording with Ryan Clark
How can you make the most of your wildlife observations? This session will teach you about why recording your wildlife sightings is important and how to generate high-quality records. Biological records are essential to many aspects of conservation and are a key part of the State of Nature Report for our three counties.

Wed 8 Feb, 7-8.30pm, online

Pollinators and Pollination with Professor Jeff Ollerton
Learn about the vital ecological process of pollination and the natural history of pollinators. This workshop will introduce the main groups, with guidance on how to identify them, and explore their ecology and behaviour. We will also consider why conserving these species is so important and discuss what individuals can do to help ensure their future diversity and abundance.

Wed 22 Feb, 7-8.30pm, online

Introduction to Mosses and Liverworts with Rachel Carter
Mosses and liverworts are beautiful little plants which deserve close examination. This course will help you to appreciate their fine detail, and to use your observations to identify different species. We will use hand lenses for field identification, and also spend time examining a range of species with microscopes.

Sat 11 Mar, 10-4pm, Lings

Introduction to Woodlice, Centipedes and Millipedes with Brian Eversham
Learn the basics of how to reliably identify these three groups in the field. Woodlice and millipedes are important decomposers whereas centipedes are generalist predators. All live in similar places and are conveniently recorded together.

Sun 12 Mar, 10am-4pm, Old Sulehay

Introduction to Insects with Brian Eversham
Discover the diversity and importance of insects, and learn how important they are for conservation and ecology. We will explore which kinds are most important in which habitats, and how their lifestyles make the different groups useful for understanding and monitoring nature reserves. You will see the sorts of features used in identifying species in different groups, and point the way to studying any chosen group in more detail.

Wed 22 Mar, 7-8.30pm, online

Pond Dipping for Adults with Kevin Rowley
Dipping in pools with a net is a well-known activity for children. But it need not be an activity exclusively practised by children. This course will take the “simple” a step further, by introducing participants to techniques for pond assessment and providing a crash-course in identification of pond macro-invertebrates to species level.

Sat 15 Apr, 10am-4pm, Cambourne

Find out more and book online wildlifebcn.org/workshops
Mammal Tracks and Signs with Peter Pilbeam

This workshop will explore the mammal tracks and signs that you might come across in the countryside. ‘Tracks’ could include those of the larger mammals like badgers, foxes, otters and deer, but will hopefully include the smaller mammals like hedgehogs and water voles - all depends on the weather. ‘Signs’ can be a wide variety of things, including droppings, hair, fur, feeding signs (like holes in nuts) and ‘homes’ including badger setts and water vole burrows.

Sat 22 Apr, 10am-4pm, Hayley Wood

Warbler Identification with Tony Fulford

This workshop aims to help participants identify our warblers by voice and plumage. Participants will look at warbler songs and key features of warblers. This workshop is open to beginners and those wanting to improve existing identification skills. The outdoor session will test skills in the field in the Great Fen.

Sat 22 Apr, 10am-12pm, Great Fen (indoor), and Sun 23 Apr, 7-10am, Great Fen (outdoor)

Water Voles and other Riverside Mammals with Iain Webb and Ruth Hawksley

Learn more about riverside mammals including water vole, otter and Daubenton’s bat. The day starts with an indoor session looking at ecology, field signs and current local status, before a field trip to look for signs.

Sun 23 Apr, 10am-4pm, Trumpington Meadows

Introduction to Bats with Henry Stanier

Explore the natural history of bats, what they are and where they are, their place in the world and how they live in it. Includes the option of an evening guided walk, in Cambs or Northants, to detect and observe local species and gain experience in using ultrasound detectors to “listen” to bat echolocation.

Wed 26 Apr, 7-9pm, online
Wed 10 May, 8.30pm, Summer Leys walk with Gwen Hitchcock and Juliette Butler
Sat 13 May, 8.30pm, St Ives walk with Henry Stanier

An Introduction to Woodland Bird Identification and Birdsong with Paul Gosling

This workshop includes visual and aural identification and an exploration of the niches each species occupies within the woodland, focusing on feeding, nesting and behaviour. The day begins with an indoor presentation followed by a field trip around the reserve.

Sat 13 May, 10am-4pm, Lings

Introduction to Spiders with Lawrence Bee

The aim of this workshop is to familiarise participants with the 34 different spider families found in the UK, highlighting distinguishing characteristics observable in the field. After an indoor session, fieldwork and demonstration of collection techniques will take place on the reserve.

Sun 14 May, 10am-4pm, Cooper’s Hill
Butterfly Identification and Ecology with Andrew Bladon and Matt Hayes

Around 60 species of butterfly live in the UK and a diverse selection of them can be seen on Wildlife Trust BCN reserves. A complex life cycle means that many butterflies are extremely sensitive to environmental change and so act as important bio-indicators. Therefore, studying butterflies can help us monitor natural ecosystems and protect a wide array of other animals and plants. This workshop aims to provide background information on the biology and ecology of butterflies, and includes a field trip where you will learn to identify some of the species yourself.

Sat 20 May, 10am-4pm, Totternhoe

Using Keys to Identify Woodland Flowers with Matt Jackson

Learn how to use keys to identify flowers in the wild, and then practise in the field. This workshop is earlier in the season, and will focus on the woodland flowers that are in bloom. The skills learnt will apply to other habitats, and there will be plenty of the flowering season left for practicing after the workshop.

Sat 20 May, 10am-4pm, Old Sulehay

An Introduction to Butterflies in Northants with David James

Find out more about the butterfly species you are likely to see in Northamptonshire. The day will start with a presentation that will include information about the identification and life cycles of our butterflies along with tips to help when conducting butterfly surveys. The field trip will put some of the identification skills into practice. No experience or equipment is necessary, although a pair of close focusing binoculars would be an advantage during the field trip.

Sun 21 May, 10am-4pm, Old Sulehay

Identification of Hoverflies Refresher with John Showers

This workshop is for people who have attended an introduction to hoverflies workshop or who have some experience with hoverflies. It will give you the chance to look at some of the less easily identified species. Pinned specimens and microscopes will be used, so that participants can see the subtle differences between similar species and gain confidence in their identification. Genera such as Platycheirus, Cheilosia, Eristalis and Sphaerophoria will be covered. A copy of ‘British Hoverflies’ by Stubbs and Falk is recommended.

Sat 3 Jun, 10am-4pm, Old Sulehay

Find out more and book online wildlifebcn.org/workshops
Introduction to Wildflower Identification with Matt Jackson

Do you want to know how to tell the difference between a speedwell and a sandwort? Or to know what the parts are that make up a flower? Learn to use identification keys and about the characteristics of plants that are used to tell them apart.

Sat 10 Jun, 10am-4pm, Nene Wetlands

Grasses I: A Beginner’s Introduction with Brian Eversham

Grasses are among the most important flowering plants, ubiquitous in almost all habitats. They can be daunting to start with, as they look so different from other wild flowers. This workshop will explain the structure of grasses, including their beautiful if subtle flowers, and help you identify common grasses in the field using a hand lens. A short guide to recognising the most distinctive species, and keys to flowering and vegetative features will be used.

Sun 18 Jun, 10am-4pm, Cambourne

Meadow Ecology and Conservation with Matt Johnson

Learn about the ecology and conservation of floodplain meadows. The indoor session will look at the ecology, management and conservation of floodplain meadows as well as botanical and hydrological monitoring techniques. The afternoon site visits will look at a SSSI meadow and will cover survey techniques, botanical identification skills and comparisons of differing management and restoration techniques.

Sat 24 Jun, 10am-4pm, Bugbrooke Meadow

An Introduction to Dragonflies with Henry Stanier

Dragonflies (including damselflies) are a fascinating group of insects and the Great Fen is a rewarding place to look for them. This is a beginner’s guide to learn more about their natural history and ecology, where and when to see them, and how to identify them (perched and in flight), covering all the species currently found in our area, plus others which may be on the way here! This workshop also includes 1-to-1 guidance on identification.

Sat 24 Jun, 10am-4pm, Great Fen

Grasses II: Practicing Grass Identification with Brian Eversham

For people who have already had a go at identifying grasses, perhaps having attended Grasses I, this day will use the same identification guides and give participants more time to practise using keys, and learning to recognise grasses outside. A little more attention will be given to vegetative, non-flowering features, so participants can begin to identify grasses at any time of year.

Sun 25 Jun, 10am-4pm, Cambourne
Trail Cameras with Henry Stanier

Whether you use trail cameras (camera traps) on a nature reserve or in your garden, they are an invaluable tool in revealing the presence and behaviour of your local wildlife. Do you know which one to purchase? Do you know how to set it up, how to position it, and what to do with the resulting photographs and/or video clips? This workshop will help you to get the best from your trail camera.

Sun 25 Jun, 10am-4pm, Great Fen

Introduction to Burying Beetles with Ellie Bladon

Burying beetles are nature’s undertakers, turning the bodies of small dead animals into edible nests for their offspring. This workshop will cover the fascinating ecology of the *Nicrophorus* genus and provide tips on identifying and sampling them. The workshop will then move to the nature reserve to demonstrate methods for trapping and monitoring burying beetles. (Note: dead mice are used for this process).

Sat 22 Jul, 10am-4pm, Cambourne

Introduction to Wildflower Identification with Brian Eversham

Do you want to know how to tell the difference between a speedwell and a sandwort? Or to know what the parts are that make up a flower? Learn to use identification keys and about the characteristics of plants that are used to tell them apart.

Sun 30 Jul, 10am-4pm, Cambourne

BES1: Species and Habitats (including habitat classification) with Brian Eversham

This workshop combines an introduction to the basic ecology of species and their populations with a description and classification of the main habitats in our three counties. The second part of the day is a brief introduction to the main habitat types in the three counties, and how they can be classified.

Sun 13 Aug, 10am-4pm, Old Sulehay

Conservation on Farms: How do we encourage plant life in arable land? with Owen Mountford

Farming has often been blamed for the decline in wildlife. However, many farmers have tried to manage with nature in mind, and much research has focused on the impact of farming and ways to encourage plant life. This workshop will examine changes in the arable flora and actions to protect and restore it, and discuss national projects and initiatives by local farmers to convert the ‘arable desert’ into a landscape where wild plants have a place.

Sat 19 Aug, 10am-4pm, Great Fen

BES2: Habitat Management and Monitoring

The Trust puts much effort into grazing, mowing, coppicing and other activities – why? How do we decide what to do? What are the underlying

Find out more and book online [wildlifebcn.org/workshops](http://wildlifebcn.org/workshops)
principles? The day will concentrate on the key ecological processes in managing habitat, and the basic features of the major habitat types – heathland, grassland, wetland and woodland. We will also explain the role of monitoring in conservation, and which plants and animals to record in which habitats.

**Sun 3 Sept, 10am-4pm, Old Sulehay**

**Introduction to Leaf-mining Insects with Andy and Melissa Banthorpe**

The larvae of several groups of insects feed within leaves of trees and plants making characteristic traces as they do so. Indoor presentations will cover the identification and ecology of some of the more commonly encountered species, plus introduce the various web-based resources that are available. After a session indoors there will be time outside to collect material and practice identification.

**Sat 9 Sep, 10am-4pm, Cambourne**

**Fens, Bogs and Marshes in Britain: Their Flowers and Vegetation with Owen Mountford**

Human livelihood has always depended on the products and services from wet places, but semi-natural wetlands are now amongst the rarest habitats we have. British wetlands range from tidal mudflats to blanket bogs, each habitat with its distinctive flora. This course will introduce the variety of wetland habitats and flowers, with a particular focus on the Fenland basin.

**Sat 16 Sep, 10am-4pm, Great Fen**

**Small Mammals – Identification and Surveying with Peter Pilbeam**

Experience the capture and identification of small mammals, along with a range of related aspects of work on small mammals. The evening session will be used to set a variety of small mammal traps and the early start is to see what’s been caught overnight. There will be a session on British mammals in general, methods of study (including owl pellet analysis) and on small mammal surveying.

**Sat 21 and Sun 22 Oct, 5-7.30pm and 8am-1pm, Old Sulehay**

**Coppicing with Ian Wilson**

This workshop is a practical introduction to coppicing. The day will be spent at the wood looking at coppicing, layering and ride-widening and how these activities can benefit the flora and fauna of the wood.

**Sat 19 Nov, 10am-4pm, Short Wood**

Want to learn more about our wonderful local wildlife but don’t know where to start?

Check out our short, informal **Wildlife for Beginners** sessions and guided walks run by our knowledgeable Communities and Wildlife staff and volunteers.

For more information, please visit our website: [wildlifebcn.org/events](http://wildlifebcn.org/events)