Wildlife Trust for
Beds, Cambs & Northants

Made possible with
Heritage Fund



Learn more about the wildlife and habitats of Beds, Cambs & Northants

Wildlife Training Workshops 2027

Wildlife Training Workshops programme 2027

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 skills with a group of like-minded people.

We offer a mixture of face-to-face and online workshops, some with optional outdoor sessions, across Beds, Cambs and Northants. This year we are pleased to offer workshops designed for teenagers again, thanks to funding via our Peatland Progress project fro the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Find all the information on our website: **wildlifebcn.org/workshops**

If you have any queries, contact Juliette Butler, Training Workshops Officer on 07793 606026 or email **trainingworkshops@wildlifebcn.org**

KEY

- B Bedfordshire
- C Cambridgeshire
- N Northamptonshire
- Online
- NEW for 2027

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

Introduction to Plant Galls with Megan Shersby

Plant galls – and the species that cause them – are unusual, often overlooked and very under-recorded. This introductory online workshop for beginners will explain what they are and how they are formed, and provide tips for finding and identifying some common galls. Plus, how and why to submit scientific records.

Wed 13 Jan, 7-8.30pm, Online

Introduction to Winter Tree Identification with Matt Hamilton

Learn to identify common, native broadleaved deciduous and, if found, exotic trees in winter. Types of trees and their associations helps with a better understanding of your local nature reserves.

Sat 23 Jan, 10am–4pm, Cambourne

Waterfowl – Identification of Ducks, Geese and Swans with Nathan Long

A practical workshop designed for beginners and developing birders, where we will look at the key features and behaviours, in order to identify ducks, geese, and swans in the field. With practical tips, insights, and plenty of opportunities to practice your ID skills, you'll leave more confident in spotting and identifying these wetland specialists.

Sun 31 Jan, 10am–4pm, Grafham Water

ALDER BUDS © VAUGHN MATTHEWS

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 6 OR Sun 7 Feb, 10am–5pm, Cambourne. £90 (£85 for members)

Introduction to Insects with Brian Eversham

This workshop will introduce the diversity of insects, and how important they are for conservation and ecology. We will look at habitats, and how their lifestyles make the different groups useful for understanding and monitoring. You will see the sorts of features used in identifying species in different groups, and there will be a summary of the range of books, keys and websites which are available.

Wed 17 Feb, 7pm-8.30pm, Online

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 spend time examining a range of species with microscopes.

Sat 6 Mar, 10am–4pm, Lings

Introduction to Slugs and Snails with Brian Eversham

Slugs and snails are amongst the most recognisable and important decomposer organisms. As most species are very poor dispersers, they are also excellent indicators on ancient woodland, grassland and wetland habitats. This workshop will help participants with the identification of slugs and snails in the field.

Wed 17 Mar, 7pm-8.30pm, Online



CLADONIA BACILLARIS © BRIAN EVERSHAM

Introduction to Lichens, especially Heathland Lichens with Brian Eversham

Lichens are among the best indicators of air quality and pollution, and are valuable in assessing conservation value of habitats. They grow on rocks and walls, trees, and on the soil. This workshop gives a general introduction to their diversity and structure, with examples on trees and buildings, then focus on the beautiful lichens which grow on heathland soil, especially the genus *Cladonia*. As well as monitoring techniques and field identification, the workshop will introduce the use of chemical tests to help identification.

Sat 27 Mar, 10am–4pm, Cooper's Hill

Mammal Tracks and Signs with Peter Pilbeam

This workshop will highlight the sorts of

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mammal tracks and signs that you might come across when out in the countryside. 'Tracks' could include those of the larger mammals, but will hopefully include the smaller mammals like hedgehogs and water voles – all may depend on the weather. 'Signs' can include droppings, hair, fur, feeding signs and 'homes' – badger setts and water vole burrows.

Sat 10 Apr, 10am–4pm, Hayley Wood

Identifying Water Bugs with Kevin Rowley N

This workshop is for people who are interested in identifying aquatic invertebrates using detailed keys. Water bugs are a good starting point, as there are a smaller number of species, some of which can be easily identified, either by using keys or a microscope. It also includes a field trip to collect specimens for identification.

Sat 17 Apr, 10am–4pm, Pitsford Water

Water Voles and Other Riverside Mammals with Iain Webb and Ruth Hawksley C

Find out about riverside mammals including beavers, water voles, otters and Daubenton's bats. The day will start with an indoor session looking at ecology, field signs and the current local status of the various species, and will include a field trip to look for signs.

Sat 24 Apr, 10am–4pm, Trumpington Meadows

Introduction to Common Bird Identification and Birdsong with Juliette Butler N

This beginner's workshop will include identifying birds by looking at features, and listening to their song. By the end of the day participants should be able to recognise some of the birds they're likely to encounter in their local area. The day will include indoor presentations, and field trips around the reserve.

Sat 24 Apr, 10am–4pm, Lings

Introduction to Warbler Identification with Duncan Woodhead B

The workshop is aimed at familiarising everyone with the identification of some of our more common wood and scrubland warbler species. We will aim to identify each species based on song and calls, appearance and habits, firstly in the field followed by an indoor session to consolidate our learning. We would hope to see/hear 7 species of warbler on our walk and will cover additional UK warbler species in our indoor session.

Sat 8 May, 7am-12.30pm, Strawberry Hill



SAWFLY © ANDREW GREEN

Introduction to Sawflies with Andrew Green N

An opportunity to explore this fascinating group of 11 families of sawflies using keys, specimens and microscopes to practice identification. We'll also discuss aspects of their ecology and suggest some targets for recording during the coming year. This workshop is suitable for beginners as well as more experienced recorders who want to get more familiar with the group. Specimens will be available for use with the keys; if you have your own to be checked please bring them.

Sat 15 May, 10am–4pm, Old Sulehay

Workshops for Teens

These workshops are designed specifically for young people aged 13+.

Made possible with Heritage Fund

Introduction to Ecology with Brian Eversham C

Calling all ecologists of the future! Do you have a passion for wildlife but not sure where to start? Join WTBCN Chief Executive, Brian Eversham for an introductory workshop. Set in the heart of the Great Fen you will learn how to identify different habitats, their importance and how to monitor in the context of our changing world.

Thu 27 May, 10am–4pm, Ramsey Heights

Introduction to Invertebrates with Brian Eversham C

This day will explain why invertebrates matter, and how their ecology and behaviour affects the ways in which we survey for them. We will try out the range of techniques for finding and surveying invertebrates, including direct searching and transects, sampling methods such as beating and sweeping, and trapping techniques such as pitfalls and baited traps (with syrup for ants!). Having found lots of invertebrates, we will examine some indoors, and look at the sorts of things that help us to identify species.

Fri 20 Aug, 10am–4pm, Ramsey Heights

Introduction to Bats with Gwen Hitchcock and Juliette Butler C

An introduction to the fascinating world of bats, dispelling some of the myths that surround them. This workshop will include an indoor session covering their natural history and survey techniques, followed by an evening walk to see and hear bats using ultrasonic detectors.



Sat 22 May, 5pm-10.30pm, Paxton Pits

Introduction to Wildflower Identification with Siân Williams C

This workshop will focus on where to start with wildflower identification. Learn to recognise and name the different parts of a plant to help you work through keys and understand the descriptions in field guides. Find out about key features that can provide shortcuts to recognise common groups. The day will include a walk to practice in the field.

Sat 5 Jun, 10am–4pm, Cambourne

Butterfly Identification and Ecology with Matt Hayes C

Around 60 species of butterfly live in the UK and a diverse selection of them can be seen locally. A complex life cycle means that many are extremely sensitive to environmental change and

SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE © HENRY STANIER

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these species can 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 will provide background information on the biology and ecology of butterflies, and will also include a field trip where you will learn to identify some of the species.

Sat 5 Jun, 10am–4pm, Trumpington Meadows



GREATER KNAPWEED © REBECCA NEAL

Introduction to Wildflower Identification with Matt Jackson N

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

Sat 12 Jun, 10am–4pm, Old Sulehay

Introduction to Grasses with Monica O'Donnell C

Grasses are among the most important flowering plants, ubiquitous in almost all habitats. There are a limited number of different species in 'everyday' habitats – roadside verges, field margins, footpath edges etc. (around 20) – but identifying them can seem daunting. Once you have a few in your mind, it is easier to add others. We will look at some of these everyday species in detail and examine the structures that are important to distinguish them. The afternoon will be spent looking at species in the field, how to build on the number you can recognise in a gradual and gentle way.

Sat 12 Jun, 10am–4pm, Cambourne

Floodplain Meadows, Hydromorphology and River Restoration with Matt Johnson N

Learn about the ecology and conservation of floodplain meadows and how they interact with the rivers around them. The indoor session will look at the ecology, management and conservation of floodplain meadows as well an introduction to river hydromorphology and river restoration techniques. The afternoon site visit will look at a wildflower rich meadow and will cover survey techniques and botanical ID. Interested participants will be able to book onto a more in-depth monitoring day (details tbc).

Sat 19 Jun, 10am–4pm, Ditchford

Introduction to Beetles with Brian Eversham N

Explore the world of beetles, one of the most diverse orders of insects; from ladybirds to longhorns, ground-beetles to diving beetles, what are they and how they live. After a general introduction to their ecology and behaviour, we will aim to recognise the most diverse and frequent families – rove-beetles, ground-beetles, weevils and leaf-beetles – and to try identifying some groups to species level. The day will also offer tips on how to get to know beetles more deeply, which families to approach first, and review the available literature and websites.

Sun 20 Jun, 10am–4pm, Old Sulehay



GREENFICNHES © DAVE JACKSON

Wildlife Photography Workshop with Dave Jackson N

So you want to be a wildlife photographer, have the gear and some idea, but want to step up to the next level? Whether it's birds, insects or flora this workshop will give you an understanding of the exposure triangle, shutter speed, RAW vs JPEG and other aspects to enable you to get better results from your camera, and where you might be going wrong. We'll be looking at theory including camera settings and editing and field practice out on the reserve. Dave is a renowned local wildlife photographer and has won awards for his bird photography.

Sun 20 Jun, 10am–4pm, Pitsford Water

Introduction to Macro Moths with Mischa Cross N

Discover more about macro moths, their identification and moth trapping. The session will be classroom based with a short visit to the moth traps. Identification will be using live specimens which will be released at the end of the day.

Sat 26 Jun, 10am–4pm, Pitsford Water

Introduction to Wildlife Gardening with Catherine Weightman C

This workshop is a general introduction to wildlife gardening, including sources of information advice and opportunities to discuss participants' own wildlife gardening ideas. The day includes a tour of the garden at Ramsey Heights nature reserve, plus visits to the trainer's wildlife town garden, established over 25 years, and other local wildlife gardens.

Sat 26 Jun, 10am–4pm, Ramsey Heights

Introduction to Dragonflies with Mark Tyrrell N

This workshop will focus on finding and identifying dragonflies which can be found in Northants. Participants will learn how to identify flying adults, and the exuviae (the cast larval skins) of emerged species, will also be looked at.

Sun 27 Jun, 10am–4pm, Nene Wetlands

The Ecology of Climate Change with Brian Eversham C

The climate crisis affects all our wildlife, and changes how we manage nature reserves. This workshop will explore the underlying ecology. What is happening to the climate? Impacts on habitats; how plants are responding; changes in geographic range and biology of invertebrates and vertebrates; invasive species and diseases. The field trip will look for climate change impacts, and record 'new' species which have arrived in our area recently.

Sun 18 Jul, 10am–4pm, Cambourne

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An Introduction to Butterflies in Northants with David James

N

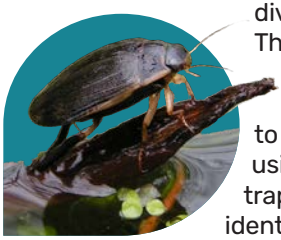
Find out more about the butterfly species you are likely to see in Northants. The day will start with a presentation that will include information about the identification and life cycles of our butterflies along with tips to help when conducting butterfly surveys. The field trip will put some of the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

Sat 24 Jul, 10am–4pm, Pitsford Water

Introduction to Water Beetles with Kevin Rowley and Henry Stanier

C

Water Beetles are a great indicator species and the Great Fen has a diverse variety. This workshop will introduce you to the group, how to sample them using nets and traps and how to identify them. Field trips in Woodwalton Fen and the Great Fen will be included to to set/collect traps and use net sampling.



WATER BEETLE © RICHARD BURKMAR

Sat 2 AND Sun 3 Oct, 10am–4pm both days, Ramsey Heights
£95 (£90 for members)

Small Mammals with Peter Pilbeam

C

Capture and identification of small mammals will be demonstrated in this workshop 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 – the welfare of any trapped animal is of paramount importance. There will be a session on British mammals in general, methods of study (including owl pellet analysis) and on small mammal surveying.

Sat 16 (5pm-6.30pm) AND Sun 17 Oct (8am-1pm), Cambourne

BES1: Species and Habitats (Including Habitat Classification) with Brian Eversham

C

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 7 Nov, 10am–4pm, Cambourne

BES2: Habitat Management and Monitoring with Brian Eversham

C

The Trust puts much effort into grazing, mowing, coppicing and other activities – why? How do we decide what to do? What are the underlying principles? The day will concentrate on the underlying ecological processes in managing habitat, and the basic features of the major habitat types – heathland, grassland, wetland and woodland. The last part of the day will explain the role of monitoring in conservation, and which plants and animals to record in which habitats.

Sun 28 Nov, 10am–4pm, Cambourne

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. The Manor House, Broad Street, Cambourne CB23 6DH. Registered Charity no. 1000412. Cover image: Guy Edwardes/2020Vision.