

HNHS Autumn Meeting and AGM Saturday 17 October 2.00 - 5.00

Woolmer Green Hall .

The AGM will be held at about 4.00.

We will have a full programme of talks and news, including a feature on the Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles Atlas project and presentation of our 1875 Award for 2015.

This is your chance to catch up with our county recorders and other members of the Society.

We will circulate full details nearer the time.

2015 Festival of Wildlife 24-26 July. We will be joining forces with the Herts & Middx Wildlife Trust again for a series of events, many aimed at families.

HNHS Invited Lecture

Wednesday 25 November, at 8.00

Hertfordshire Geology and Landscape by Prof John Catt

A joint HNHS and Welwyn Natural History Society meeting Welwyn Civic Hall. John will highlight aspects of the fascinating geology of our county and how it shapes the landscape

Other events - Check our website for all the latest news and a monthly list of all the wildlife meetings and events in the county, compiled from the activities of all the wildlife organisations in the county.

Contributions for The Hertfordshire Naturalist 2015 - deadline 30 April 2015.

Please write a paper or short note on something of interest that you have observed and send it to Stuart Warrington, 01707885676 or email stuart.warrington@nationaltrust.org.uk.

HNHS Committee news - we are seeking new people to come forward to help run the Society and new Trustees to join the Management Committee to ensure the Society can function effectively and face new challenges - so volunteers welcome. Our current chair Trevor James will be standing down at the AGM, so we are also seeking a new Chair.

We have vacancies for recorders for several groups of species too. Joe Gray has opted to champion Shield Bugs - would you like to look after the interests of a particular group?

There is lots more information on our website. For those of you who would like more information but do not have access to the internet, please contact with Linda Smith who will send paper copies of items on request. *HNHS and Herts Bird Club are run entirely by volunteers and funded by subscriptions from members.*

What's going on?

Countywide survey for mammals, amphibians and reptiles 2015-2019 - now in full swing

Please take part in this countywide survey to collect data to produce a new county atlas. This is a joint project between HNHS, University of Hertfordshire, Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Herts Environmental Records Centre and Herts Amphibians and Reptiles Group.

We have set up a small team, including Jenny Jones (County Recorder), Ian Flack, Chantal Helm, Tim Hill, Ian Carle and Dave Willis, to manage the project. See our website for full details.

All the results will be displayed on our new Atlas webpage at <http://mammals-atlas.hnhs.org>. This has maps for each species to track progress with the survey, as we did for the Herts Bird Atlas. This website was developed for us by Chris Dee and funded by donations from HNHS members.

The survey methods include both sightings and signs, so records of molehills (very visible just now), badger latrines, deer slots, frogspawn, rabbit droppings, road casualties are all valid. Also

- roving records sightings and signs for all species,
- targeted visits to priority tetrads (2x2km squares),
- targeted surveys for small mammals and reptiles,
- records at/near your home.

Your records from BTO Breeding Bird Survey and Garden BirdWatch will also be included

We hope to achieve full coverage but at the least we will ensure one intensively surveyed tetrad per 10x10km square. We are upgrading the records submission pages of our website to enable you to enter accurate grid references for the locations of sightings, this really adds value to your records.

There will be information to help with identification of species likely to be encountered in Hertfordshire together with guidelines on evidence needed to support records. We are also setting up a system for validating records. Full details are on our website and can be sent by post on request.

Come to an Atlas Training Day - The team organised a successful Atlas training day at University of Hertfordshire at Bayfordbury and will organise another if there is enough interest. Please contact Linda Smith to register an interest.

Herts Bird Club - What's going on?

2015 Rookery Census countywide. We need your help now while the nests are still visible. There are two components and you can help with both. The general survey aims to obtain a single count of the number of nests in all rookeries in the county, whilst the special survey will gather more detailed information on a smaller number of breeding colonies. All the details from a link on Herts Bird Club website or go direct to <http://hertsrooks.birdsurvey.org.uk/> or contact the organiser Chris Dee (see below).

Hertfordshire 2015 House Martin Survey - we need volunteers from all parts of the county to help - all the details will be on the website soon or contact Chris Dee (see below) for details

Hertfordshire 2015 Breeding Bird Survey. The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common breeding birds. To take part in the BBS you need to be able to spend a couple of hours on two mornings in the spring/early summer walking a 2km route through a designated 1km square. The benefits of this survey come from the comparison of counts from year to year, so ideally new volunteers should aim to be able to survey the same square for at least three years. More details on the website or from Chris Dee or Murray Orchard.

Want to get involved? For more details of all these surveys please get in touch with Chris Dee by email chris_w_dee@hotmail.com or telephone 01279 755637 or Murray Orchard murray.orchard@live.co.uk

Your wildlife records for 2015

Please submit your records either via our website or to the **Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre**, More information at www.hercinfo.org.uk or telephone Ian Carle on 01727 732 767.

Who are you nominating for our 1875 Awards for 2015?

The 1875 Awards are named after the year the Society was founded and are presented each year to an outstanding Hertfordshire Naturalist and/or someone who has made an outstanding contribution to natural history in Hertfordshire. Who would you like to see at this year's 1875 Awards? Nominations please by email or post to Linda Smith by 15 April 2015. More details of the criteria for nominations and past winners are on the website

Birds of Hertfordshire. Our fabulous new book.



Rightly proud of their achievement, authors Mike Ilett, Jack Fearnside, Chris Dee and Ken Smith (seated) and illustrator Alan Harris (standing) at the book launch for *Birds of Hertfordshire* at Verulamium Museum on 24 February. Altogether about 200 people attended the three launch events.

The book is for everyone who enjoys watching birds has been very well received - Andrew Moon said *'I can say quite honestly, and impartially, that it is the best county avifauna that I have seen - and believe me I am a serial collector of these books,'* - a typical reaction was *'I had no idea it was going to be as good as this'* more reviews are on the website.

The text includes accounts of all the species ever recorded in the county, a definitive list of rarities and dates and photographs all taken in Hertfordshire The species accounts detail the records and patterns of occurrence for all our common garden birds through to the most exotic Herts rarities. The book presents the results of the most recent Atlas surveys of breeding and wintering birds, together with analysis and comparison with the two previous atlases.

The book is available to buy direct from HNHS for £39 by post or £34 if collected, pay through the website or by sending a cheque payable to Hertfordshire Natural History Society to Linda Smith at the address below.

Herts Bird Club/BTO conference on Saturday 21st March was a great success with a capacity audience. Many thanks to Affinity Water for allowing us to use their premises for the event. Due to the limit on numbers we know some of you were disappointed at not being able to attend. Please let us know if you would have liked to come so that we can make decisions on the size of the venue for next year.