



November
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HERTFORDSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY AND BIRD CLUB NEWS

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Celebrating 150 Years!

Next year Hertfordshire Natural History Society will be 150 years old. We will be marking this impressive milestone with events that include a spring exhibition in St Albans Museum featuring the HNHS's history and its important role in recording and monitoring our county's changing wildlife. Plans range from a display of the Society's exceptional collection of rare botany books (dating from the 15th century) to a colourful exhibit celebrating the geology and wildlife of Hertfordshire's chalk streams. Work from our excellent local photographers will feature strongly, including past winners of the 'Bird Photograph of the Year' competition. There will also be quizzes, trails, dressing up and other activities designed for families and associated outdoor events. The exhibition is due to run from March until June, so watch out for further details and timings on the website. We hope as many members as possible will visit the museum and take part in our 'big birthday' celebrations!

Butterflies and nature recovery

It was good to see so many members at our recent Autumn Meeting and AGM, taking audience numbers back to pre-Covid levels. They enjoyed an excellent talk from county recorder Andrew Wood on changes (for better or worse) since his Hertfordshire and Middlesex butterfly atlas was published in 2017. The conference also provided a useful guide to work preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for our county. Marc Wilcox from Hertfordshire County Council, who leads the project in partnership with other councils, landowners and conservation organisations, paid tribute to our county recorders for their valuable help in determining priority species and habitats. Producing the nature recovery strategy is a statutory requirement with a draft report due by the end of March. Those who were unable to attend the Autumn Meeting can read reports on the HNHS website with links to videos of the presentations on our YouTube site.

2024 Award winners announced

We were pleased to announce the winners of this year's HNHS Awards at the Autumn meeting, though very sadly **Stephen Lings**, winner of the Trevor James Award for an outstanding Hertfordshire naturalist, died in March this year. Steve was the county recorder for bees and wasps, millipedes and centipedes. But as noted in the award citation – now published on the website – his many achievements as a natural historian went far beyond that. He was not only a skilled and nationally recognised entomologist, but also a talented wildlife artist and innovator in promoting sustainable, 'green' business practices. **Roger Havard**, winner of the 1875 Award for an outstanding contribution to natural history in Herts, is well-known to anyone who has visited the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Bat Group's stall at a wildlife festival. His voluntary work over 30 years as an educator in schools, introducing children of all ages to bats has become legendary. Roger has also been actively involved in the Bat Group's work helping injured animals to fly again, and surveys, such as those that discovered an important maternal roost of Western Barbastelles.

Last chance for Herts MARA records

December 2024 is the last month for the mammals, amphibians and reptiles survey (Herts MARA) that began in 2015. Don't forget to submit your final records of sightings and signs for inclusion in the forthcoming atlas!

HNHS Transactions

This newsletter is being circulated with copies of the *Hertfordshire Bird Report 2023* and the *Hertfordshire Naturalist 2024*. Congratulations, again, go to editor Clifford Smout and his editorial team for producing the Bird Report within 11 months of the last December records. Thanks also go to designer Jack Fearnside. The Hertfordshire Naturalist is in press and will be mailed to members before Christmas. Our thanks go to Stuart Warrington, the editor, and his editorial board for all their work, as well as designer Helen Baker.