

Summer 2025

Wren

Wildlife & Conservation Group

- Page 02 - A Word from the Chair - a few words from the chair James Heal
- Page 03 - Wanstead Wildlife Weekend - by James Heal
- Page 06 - Epping Forest for Everyone to Love - article by EFHT Chief Executive Peter Lewis
- Page 08 - I am often lost i thought - poem by Kelly
- Page 09 - Wanstead Wildlife Weekend - Invertebrate walk by James Heal
- Page 11 - Wanstead Waters - article by Cllr Paul Donovan
- Page 13 - Messing about on boats - article by Richard Arnopp
- Page 16 - Wanstead Flats on Fire - Heads Up by Tony Morrison
- Page 18 - Muntjac - Shy deer getting more common locally
- Page 20 - Adopt a Tree - looking after our green during the heatwaves
- Page 21 - and finally Wren Guided Butterfly Walk
- Page 23 - Useful Links



Green Eyed Flower bees, seem to really enjoy the thistles - one area has about 20 individuals next to the Roding. Pic by Pranav Khetia



a word from the chair

Local Barrister and activist, Paul Powlesland has a grand vision and also a deep sense of mission towards his beloved local river: our very own River Roding.

Some of his views regarding river restoration would be considered radical by some, but he is driven by passionate respect for his local environment and the ecosystems of the river.

He even lives on the river - literally in a reedbed (possibly the only person in London to do so).

On 18 May, Paul led the walk from the Redbridge

roundabout following the river more closely than I thought was possible all the way to Barking. It was well attended.

I can honestly say that it was the most adventurous activity I have done with the Wren Group.

Adventurous in terms of it being a reasonably lengthy and challenging walk, but also because it involved some perceived trespass on the Ilford Golf Course which is owned by the Council and, unlike some other golf courses in wilder places, is not used to people wandering along the river walkways.

We saw pollution and invasive plants and litter, but we also saw tall trees planted by Paul not so long ago, newly dug flood ditches and ponds, walkways recently cleared of litter, nesting Sand Martins, invertebrates, and wild flowers.

Paul shared history, stories, even poetry, but also

his alternative vision for the river. His passion and enthusiasm was infectious and the work that he and his friends and colleagues in the River Roding Trust have achieved is frankly incredible and against the odds - and in many ways, they are only just getting started.

The Roding has been redirected, culverted, polluted, blocked, overgrown, and neglected, but it has continued to flow throughout and now it has a growing army of advocates and volunteers.

Secrets of the Roding, like its own tributaries and the large hidden reed beds are seen by a tiny fraction of the people who live in the vicinity of the river. I wish Paul, his volunteer colleagues, and the river itself very well for the future.

James Heal
Chair Wren Group



Wanstead Wildlife Weekend

*WWW Spider walk expertly led by David Carr
as usual together with some young enthusiastic
invertebrate finders - pic b James Heal*

We have been organising the Wanstead Wildlife Weekend or something like it for almost a decade now. The original intention was as a slightly more formalised bioblitz where we counted every species - a mass citizen science natural history survey of sorts. The purpose has morphed into more of an opportunity to showcase the amazing biodiversity we have locally through family-friendly activities.

Some of the highlights across the activities included...



Almost fifty people came out on Friday evening and were rewarded with some very active bats - mainly Pipistrelles as I understand it.

Tim, who led the bat walk, was also back in Wanstead Park a very short number of hours later for the annual moth trap reveal near the Temple. This is always one of my favourite activities and lots of moths gently emerged from the egg boxes in the light trap, including crowd pleasers such as Buff Tip (*Phalera bucephala*), which looks exactly like a hewn-off section of Birch twig or small branch.



Jo Fensome selling her knitted birds - pic by Gill James

Bob led a walk along the 'transect' (technical term for specific surveyed area) a small team has been regularly surveying for butterflies. Some of the regular summer butterflies were out on show including: Essex Skipper, Small Copper,

Meadow Brown, three of our 'White' species, and a bonus from a well-showing Purple Hairstreak. This latter butterfly is often hard to spot as it is small, quite nondescript on the oft-seen underside of the wings, and likes spending time in the canopy, but one or two came down to ground level.



A fantastic time was had by all those who came to the pond dipping this morning ... with the first keen participant arriving at 9.30 catching their first samples. Pic by James Heal

Another highlight was the rather overwhelmingly well-attended pond dipping at Shoulder-of-Mutton on Sunday where Louis and Gosia share their knowledge and infectious enthusiasm with young people wading out into the lake.

All major groups of aquatic invertebrates were represented from the samples taken. The dominant insects being lesser water boatman

which was represented in almost in 100% of net sweeps. Other highlights included: water scorpion, an adult great diving beetle, nymphs of damselfly and dragon flies, a swan mussel, various fly larvae (bloodworm etc) and leeches which were extremely popular with the kids. We also found a number of smooth newt larvae and two species of fish; tench and rudd. A kingfisher also showed up but the children were more interested in 'creepy crawlies'. It was brilliant to see so much enthusiasm amongst both children and their parents, many asking to do it again. Reluctant hangers on were dragged away from the pond by their parents at 12.45.

We were blessed - as has seemingly often been the case in recent years - with lovely weather (a little too hot on the Saturday to be honest).

Despite the numbers at the pond dipping, there were still plenty of people who joined local bee and wasp expert, Tony Madgwick who helped an engaged crowd observe the drama of life

and death unfold around nest holes of both bees and wasps on the dry and dusty pathways near Heronry Pond. A small team of enthusiastic acolytes aided Tony by catching Bee Wolf wasps (*Philanthus triangularum*), Bee Foxes (*Cerceris* sp), and various species of the vivid coloured



Lovely WWW Spider walk expertly led by David Carr as usual. We added one new spider to the species list for the recording area: this female orb weaver called Phylloneta impressa with an egg sac

Jewel Wasps and their fascinating stories of predation and parasitism.

Amongst other activities, those which looked very closely indeed at some wildlife many might miss included the spider walk on Wanstead Flats and the lichen walk on Wanstead Park. Species highlights included a miniscule jumping spider found on tree trunks that looks like our common Zebra Jumping Spiders (*Salticus scenicus* agg), but is much smaller and scarcer (*S. zebraneus*), and a *Cladonia* type (lichens are not a single species!) of lichen found not on bark or stone, but on soil.

A very big thank you to all of you who

helped out over the weekend. I understand that we had about 250 people engaged with our activities and there was lovely feedback and lots of positivity throughout the weekend.

If you would like to take part in Wren activities or if you have enough knowledge to lead a walk, please do get in touch.

James Heal
Chair Wren Group



then & now

In each edition of the Wren newsletter we will be showing you a picture of an area in the Wren catchment taken around 100 years ago and how it looks today. Just for fun have a guess where this picture was taken (answer to follow). If you would like to see a particular area in this slot why not get in touch and we will see what we can do.



epping forest

for everyone to L♥ve

Help stop the potential sale of the Epping Forest Buffers Lands by the Corporation of London.

The Epping Forest Buffers Lands are parcels of land acquired by the City of London Corporation (CoLC) to physically protect the Forest from adjacent development. They are mostly, but not exclusively, in areas to the north of the Forest.

These lands, totaling 1,800 acres, are not legally part of the Forest itself but are managed to preserve the forest's environmental setting, landscape heritage, and overall quality.

Wherever you go in Epping Forest you are not far from the urban sprawl. Picture shows ongoing development in Stratford and London taken from Wanstead Flats, the southern most part of Epping Forest. Pic by Tony Morrison.



They are, literally, green fields and green spaces, which provide a physical barrier to development damaging the Forest. They also provide important wildlife corridors, and in some areas have been gently rewilding over recent years (Coopersale Common) whereas others have important ecological and heritage value in their own right (Copped Hall estate).

It is very easy to see their worth when you look at the difference between areas of the Forest protected by the Buffer Land, and areas where it has not been protected. A good current example might be Epping South, where the development of 450-550 houses is about to take place on several parcels of fields which were removed from Green Belt in the last Epping Forest District Council Local Plan. Such development has not, and could not happen, on Buffer Lands while CoLC retains the land, and while it retains their highly valuable and valued policy of not developing or selling the Buffer Lands.

What has now happened is that the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) of the City of London, has renamed the Buffer Lands as "Complementary Lands" (which suggests they are contemplating a change in use), and has ordered a review of Complementary Land policy and an appraisal of all the Complementary Lands, including looking at their value for housing, commercial or other development.

As well as the substantive issue of potentially

selling the Buffer Lands, or some of them, the proposal has set off internal discussions within the City about the governance of the Buffer Lands, and who is able to make decisions about them.



The Buffer Lands serve as a barrier, preventing development and other activities that could negatively impact Epping Forest. They are predominantly located to the north and west of the forest, offering a rural landscape that complements the woodland environment.

Picture shows Gallyhill Wood-part of Buffer Lands - pic Epping Forest Heritage Trust.

This is because CoLC is the "Conservator" of the Forest under the Epping Forest Act, and as such has a duty to protect and manage the Forest in perpetuity. CoLC is also the sole Trustee of the Epping Forest Charity, through which CoLC has managed the Forest and the Buffer Lands together for many years, primarily through the oversight, management and decisions of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee. It is therefore easy to identify clear conflicts of


interest between, for example, CoLC corporately potentially wanting income from the sale or development of the Buffer Lands, or some of them, and the City's role as Conservator of the Forest, and sole Trustee of the Epping Forest Charity.

In terms of next steps, Policy & Resources Committee, at its meeting on 12th June, while continuing with the development of the new Complementary Land Policy and Complementary Land Appraisal, made some changes to the both those processes to involve more engagement with the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, the Superintendent and other stakeholders, and pushed back the timetable for decision until December 2025.

At EFHT we strongly support the retention of the Buffer Lands as the best possible physical protection for the Forest from future development, and would rather the City was looking to acquire more Buffer Lands to better protect the Forest than looking to sell or develop them, and will be closely watching as things progress. To keep up to date on plans for the Buffer Lands, and support our efforts to retain them, please sign up to our email list or follow us on social media.

Peter Lewis
Epping Forest Heritage Trust





I am often lost in thought
of where I want to go
and places I want to see,
that I forget this place is magical
right here in front of me

by Kelly

<https://www.instagram.com/kellythepoet/#>



Wanstead wildlife weekend invertebrate walk

By last Saturday morning, June 21st, the heat of the day was becoming oppressive, but a hardy group of invertebrate hunters joined me on a short walk around Perch Pond and into the Dell and Plain of Wanstead Park.

Report by James Heal

Black-Tailed Skimmer (Orthetrum cancellatum) - pic by Bob Vaughan

As we wandered through sun-dappled clearings and dense thickets, the insect life revealed itself in bursts of movement and sometimes quiet stillness; more often under rather than on top of leaves (no further cold-blooded sunbathing needed).

A female Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) sunned herself by a dusty path on the Plain, her slate-blue eyes impassive but undoubtedly alert, while a contrasting glint of yellow and black drew our eyes to the wasp mimic Banded General (*Stratiomys potamida*); not a hoverfly but a striking soldierfly (probably the dipteran find of the day).



Small Copper (Lycaena phlaeas) - pic by James Heal

Beetles featured prominently in the day's discoveries: spiky Alder Leaf Beetle (*Agelastica alni*) larvae clustered on leaves alongside the sleeker Willow

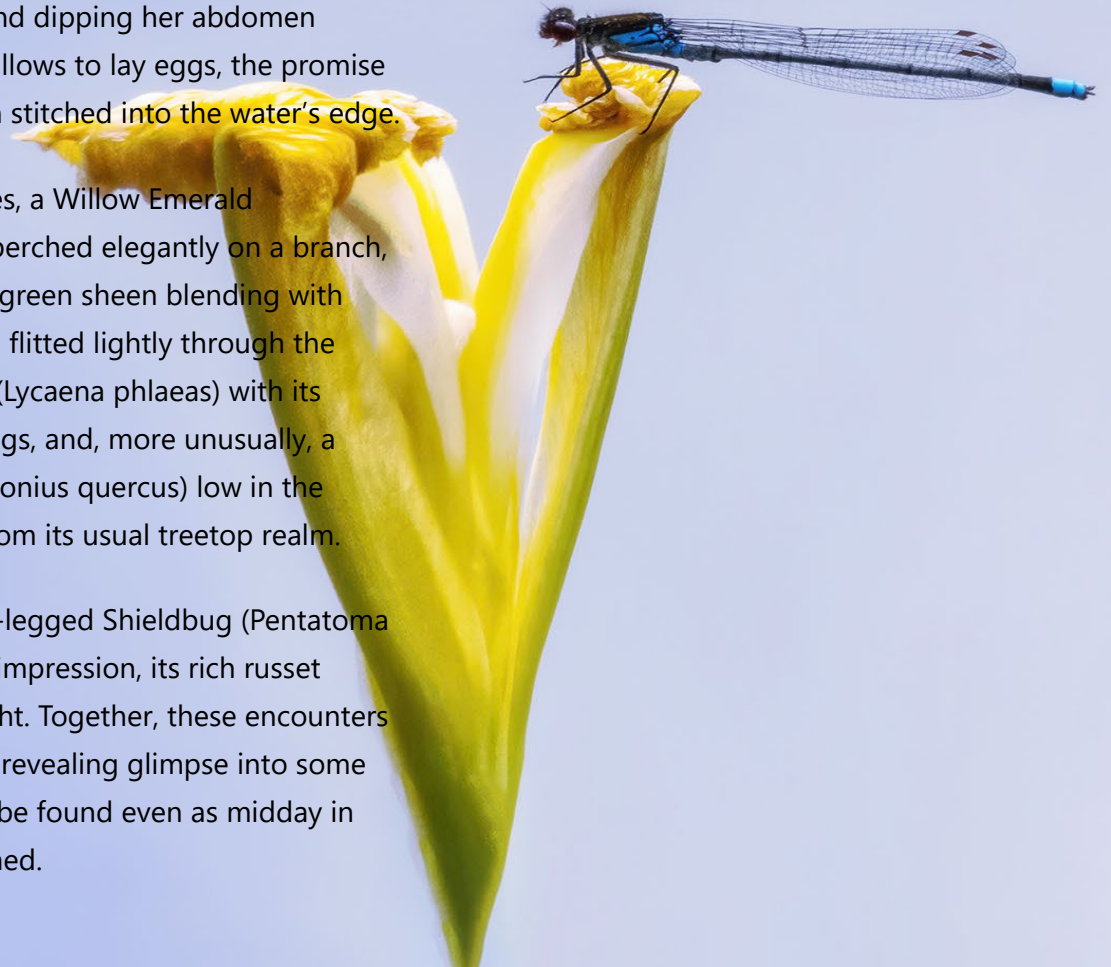
Leaf Beetle (*Plagiodera versicolora*) adults, while the hairy-backed brown and black *Lagria hirta* added texture to the mix, its velvety appearance a strange contrast to its shinier armoured kin. Ladybirds were abundant, including the Ten-Spotted Ladybird, whose variable markings often puzzle even seasoned observers.

The heat shimmered off the surface of Perch Pond, where one of the day's most captivating sights unfolded — an Emperor dragonfly (*Anax imperator*), Britain's largest, as well as patrolling up and down the shallows, was found dipping her abdomen delicately into the shallows to lay eggs, the promise of a future generation stitched into the water's edge.

Among the damselflies, a Willow Emerald (*Chalcolestes viridis*) perched elegantly on a branch, its slender frame and green sheen blending with the foliage. Butterflies flitted lightly through the heat: a Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) with its burnished orange wings, and, more unusually, a Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*) low in the undergrowth — far from its usual treetop realm.

Even the humble Red-legged Shieldbug (*Pentatoma rufipes*) made a vivid impression, its rich russet tones catching the light. Together, these encounters offered a fleeting but revealing glimpse into some of the fauna that can be found even as midday in midsummer approached.

Red-eyed Damselfly (Erythromma najas) - Pic by Bob Vaughan..



Wanstead Waters

The future of Wanstead Parks' waterways and the River Roding are inextricably linked, so what will be the best outcome?

The competing demands for water in the local area was one theme that came out of a session run last month by Epping Forest in Wanstead Park.

Here, Redbridge Cllr Paul Donovan, gives his view on the future of our much loved local waters.

Invited to the park, local stakeholders were shown around by Epping Forest staff. The focus was the Park Plan, with projects that had been undertaken and in some cases completed over the past couple of years.

On the completion side, there is the floating reed bed on the Heronry Lake. Work to restore the Grotto is underway, with refurbishment of the Temple about to start.

But perhaps the most interesting proposal is the plan to pump water from the River Roding into the adjacent Ornamental Water (where there has been no water for some time), then onto the other lakes in the park.

The new plan in a way operates the opposite way around to the originally designed water system. Then, the water flowed from the Basin on the golf course to the Shoulder of Mutton onto the Heronry Lake, the Perch Pond and finally the Ornamental Water.

The old system no longer functions well, with different lakes drying up over recent years. The Ornamental Water in particular does not hold water for long.

The stop gap measure of recent times has seen the Environment Agency (EA) granting a licence for Epping Forest to pump water from nearby bore

holes into the Heronry Lake and Perch Pond. But this is a short term arrangement, not a permanent solution.

Epping Forest Heritage Trust is set to replace the old pump house with a new one in order to extract water from the River Roding in the winter months. Though, Environment Agency approval is required for this to happen.

The role of the River Roding in this equation is an interesting one to ponder. On the one hand, there are the warnings about rising river levels with the onset of climate change. This could put surrounding residential areas under threat of being flooded. A safety valve like extraction of water to expanses like the park can relieve some of these pressures.

On the other hand, at present, river levels seem low, with competing interests seeking to draw on already depleted resources. The EA has to decide which interests take priority.

There are many calls for water to be restored to the Wanstead Park lakes. Yet, others say why should the river be depleted to maintain a man-made structure in what was the play pen of members of the British aristocracy in past centuries? The park, though, as part of Epping Forest, was of course given to the people of London by the Crown in 1878.

Indeed, the river used to run through the lake before it was separated off and straightened, as part of the 18th century designs of the park.

So there are interesting competing narratives on the question of water supplies.

Some imaginative thinking is required from all sides. Pumping water from the Roding into the lakes has a role to play but there will be a question of how much? What will future water levels be on the Roding? Maybe going forward, there should be thought given to developing more reed beds and wetland style terrain, as part of the long term solution. Or some sort of restoration of the original design, with the river running through the lake or controlled by a sluice gate?

The park needs to be viewed as but one part of the overall mosaic that includes the River Roding as well as surrounding residential and non-residential areas. A more holistic view is needed to ensure a truly sustainable long term solution.

Cllr Paul Donovan



Paul Donovan is Labour councillor for Wanstead Village ward, Redbridge Council and a blogger paulfdonovan.blogspot.com

messing about in boats

One of Epping Forest's ambitions, which has been enshrined for some time in the long- term management plan for Wanstead Park, is to reintroduce boating as a recreational activity. There remain practical issues to be addressed before this can be realised but, in the meantime, there is nothing to stop us looking at the long history of "messaging about in boats" in Wanstead Park.

Article by Richard Arnopp



The eastern end of Heronry Lake, Wanstead Park. The photograph shows boats moored and in use - note tennis courts in the distance, the refreshment chalet and Chalet Wood

When Wanstead Park was a private pleasure garden, visitors made numerous references to boats being used on its chain of lakes.



In 1908 the Epping Forest Committee formally agreed to West Ham's proposal to excavate and concrete the bed of Heronry Lake, something that had evidently been facilitated by the fact that the Local Government Board was now making a total of £9,000 (c.£700,000 today) available for more relief work. The Epping Forest Fund added a further £500. It was estimated that the excavation would cost between £2,000 and £3,000 with the concreting costing considerably more.

Picture shows unemployed relief work on the Lake, Wanstead Park, 1909, with ruins of Grotto in background.

In 1723, John Macky describes "a Bason of Water of near half a Mile in Circumference, on which my Lord keeps a Gondola for his Pleasure". This gondola, or a sibling, appears on paintings and engravings of the 1730s and 40s, and a dedicated boathouse was built at the southern end of the Ornamental Water. In the early 1760s, the Grotto was built as a dual-purpose structure with a boat dock at the lower level. In 1822,

the estate sale catalogue lists a number of boats which may have been used for leisure rather than utilitarian purposes.

When the Corporation of London purchased Wanstead Park as an addition to Epping Forest, the Conservators found the lakes in a dreadful condition after 60 years of neglect. The Heronry Pond had been drained to a third of its previous size by a tenant farmer. As most of it was very shallow, he had cut the dam separating it from the Perch Pond in order to lower the water level and create more grazing for his animals.



Members of the West Ham Distress Committee pose for the camera during a visit to Heronry Lake during the re-digging of the lake and provision of a concrete rim and base in 1906.

Also, the Ornamental Water was badly silted and in places "very black and offensive". However, these problems were rectified by purposeful action over the next couple of years.

The park was opened to the public in 1882 and, from the outset; boat hire on the lakes was envisaged as potentially one of the major attractions of the park.



Creating new island excavating and pouring concrete at Heronry Lake -1905. Around 100 unemployed labourers were taken on to do this work, with between 400-500 men being turned away every day. The working day lasted eight hours, from 8am to 5pm with an hour's break for lunch.

A boathouse was constructed between the Heronry and Perch Ponds and, in 1883, a tenant found to operate a boating concession covering both lakes. This proved every bit as popular as anticipated.

All went well until, in 1901, disaster struck. On 13 September of that year, the Essex County Chronicle reported ; "One of the large fishponds in Wanstead Park has dried up, and another has greatly shrunk. It is supposed that this is the result of the cutting of a drain for some new houses close at hand".

Over the next few years, the Heronry Pond was often greatly depleted or entirely empty, while the

Perch Pond also shrank considerably, on at least one occasion drying up completely at its western end. Salvation came from the Borough Engineer of West Ham, John Morley, who was looking for projects to relieve local unemployment.



Although any work was welcome, the conditions the men faced were back-breaking, involving levelling very uneven heathland, then planting and tilling, as well as digging and draining the areas that were to become the necklace of lakes in the southern forest. And all without the aid of machinery. Picture shows the worker' camp at the Heronry Lake, Wanstead Park.

Local authorities had been given new powers by the Unemployed Workmen Act 1905, and he proposed excavating the Heronry Pond to a uniform depth (3½-4ft) and lining it with concrete. This was intended to improve the pond's amenity value by rendering it more suitable for boating and swimming. The work was given the go-ahead and carried out over the winter of 1906-7. As well as re-lining the Heronry Pond, the West Ham Distress Committee also made it the focus of some 2½

miles of surface drainage to improve the water supply, stretching across Wanstead Flats from the Leytonstone border.

The relining of the Heronry Pond successfully resolved the problem of leakage for about 35 years. Unfortunately, the northern rim of the Heronry Pond was damaged by several high explosive bombs in 1941, and a V1 impact in 1944 caused catastrophic damage to the bed of the lake. Repairs carried out in the late 1940s when the Corporation received compensation from the War Office were never permanently successful, despite further efforts over the next decade or so. To make matters worse, the drainage system feeding the pond also failed at around the same time.



Wanstead Park Boating Lake (Heronry Pond) - 1913

Boating continued, now in the Perch Pond only, from 1947 for perhaps a quarter of a century longer.



Ornamental Waters Wanstead Park showing piles being driven into the lake bed to construct huge dams isolating part of the Waters for the cleaning scheme in 1909

Recently some thought was given to reinstating the Perch Pond, which is easier to keep considerable ecological value. So, if boating is restored, it will have to be in the Heronry Pond. That will mean keeping rather more water in it than we have seen in recent years!

I am indebted to former Verderer Richard Morris OBE and the late Alan Cornish for some of the details in this article. Images from the postcard collections of Richard Arnopp and Tony Morrison.

Richard Arnopp
Friends of Wanstead Park

<https://wansteadpark.org.uk>



Firefighters are preparing for what is expected to be an increase in wildfires in London over the summer months with regular drills in the city's parks - but nothing can train you for the real thing. Pic by Peter Williams.

Wanstead flats on fire

Earlier in the month there was the first of the now 'seasonal' grass fires on Wanstead Flats. Ten fire engines and around 70 firefighters were sent to tackle the blaze. Multiple pockets of fire affected an area of approximately 14 acres of grassland. There were no reports of any injuries.

Capel Road, Aldersbrook Road and Forest Road were closed off and people advised to avoid the area where possible.



Fire crews worked hard, in hot, arduous conditions to bring the fire under control. They deployed a wildfire response vehicle to the incident and also had Wildfire Support Officers at the scene, to support the Incident Commander. They also worked closely with partners from City of London Corporation.

The Brigade's wildfire response vehicles provide off-road capability enabling the transportation of additional equipment closer to fires on open ground. Each vehicle carries approximately 475 litres of water, a backpack blower, ear defenders, beaters and misting lance technology, which allows firefighters to pump water and drive, enabling them to tackle grass fires more quickly and safely. The Brigade is currently trialling four wildfire response vehicles across the capital.

According to the London Fire Brigade during heatwaves, it is important everyone acts responsibly to prevent fires from occurring. As the weather becomes increasingly drier, it only takes a few sparks to lead to a fire spreading rapidly. In London, this can be dangerous because so many of our green spaces lie close to homes and other properties.

If you're heading out, please don't take a disposable BBQ with you. They can retain heat for several hours after use and are banned by local authorities from many of London's parks. Also make sure you are discarding of cigarettes properly and take rubbish home with you if no bins are available.



There is currently a heightened risk of grass fires and wildfires in London. Ten fire engines and About 70 firefighters were called to tackle a grass fire affecting 14 acres on Wanstead Flats earlier this month. It is thought that the fire was caused by a portable BBQ. Pic by Peter Williams.

At home, make sure your BBQ is positioned away from flammable items like fences, sheds, decking and trees and please don't have any type of BBQ on your balcony. We're also strongly advising people to avoid burning any waste in this type of weather and to not have bonfires, particularly in their gardens.

Remember

- ☐ Outdoor barbeques are BANNED in Redbridge's parks.
- ☐ If you smoke, please put out your cigarettes properly. Please be careful with vapes and batteries and put your rubbish in a bin!
- ☐ Discarded glass bottles and jars can act like lenses under the sun and set fires.
- ☐ If you see anyone having a BBQ or lighting a fire call 020 8532 1010 or email eppingforest@cityoflondon.gov.uk
- ☐ If you see a fire or smoke, please dial 999 immediately and report it. The free [what3words](#) app can help you pinpoint your location, so download it now.
- ☐ Don't try to tackle the fire yourself. Do not get into conflict with anyone causing a fire.

For more information on grass fires see the [London Fire Brigade website](#)

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/grass-and-wildfires/>



muntjac

Main pic - Bob Vaughan had a close encounter with a Muntjac just east of Shoulder of Mutton Pond, Wanstead Park.

Local residents have reported sightings of small deer, likely Muntjac Deer or Reeve's Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*), in areas like Bush Wood, the City of London Cemetery, Wanstead Park, and more recently Wanstead Flats. Named after the naturalist John Reeves, who first introduced the species to England in the early 19th century, Muntjac Deer have since become common in southern England's urban and rural areas. Classified as an invasive species in 2019, they are protected under the Deer Act of 1991.



Muntjac are small, stocky deer, standing 45–52 cm tall and weighing around 14 kg. They have coppery brown fur, with male deer featuring black V-shaped stripes and backward-sloping antlers, while females have black diamond-shaped stripes. Active during dawn and dusk, they feed on over 85 types of plants, including shrubs, berries, and even insects.

These deer have a unique vocalization, resembling a human coughing, to warn of danger or attract mates. They can mate throughout the year, have a gestation period of about 210 days, and usually give birth to one fawn. Muntjac populations continue to rise in the UK, without natural predators, leading to increased sightings and occasional vehicle collisions, particularly near urban areas.

Much is known about the managed red and fallow deer herds in established

public spaces such as our Royal Parks. But there are fewer records of the wild deer that roam in the capital's outer suburbs - mostly roe and muntjac.



Muntjac are becoming more common on our patch but little is known about numbers and spread across our capital. Pic - a muntjac running across Wanstead Flats, just north of the large skylark enclosure by Andy

Because of this, the London Wildlife Trust needs help in recording sightings of wild deer across the capital so their distribution can be mapped, along with an idea of population densities. This information will be used to develop future management strategies.

If you see any deer on our patch please get in touch with the London Wildlife Trust and complete their [online survey](https://www.wildlondon.org.uk/campaigns/record-your-sightings/deer).



More: <https://www.wildlondon.org.uk/campaigns/record-your-sightings/deer>

“हर चीज़ में खूबसूरती ढूँढें”

“Find the beauty in everything” - Hindi



adopt something green

It's hard to imagine that not so long ago much of the country was under water. Now, we are approaching the height of summer, Thames Valley stands a very good chance of having a 'hosepipe ban'. With climate change very much in the news we should perhaps expect more extremes in our weather. All the more reason we should appreciate the benefits that trees provide.

Trees put oxygen in the air and take out carbon dioxide. They create cooler micro climates under their canopies. They create much needed shade, protecting us from harmful solar rays. They even help to clean the air by filtering out dust particles and pollutants, not to mention the desirable effect they have on softening the often hard urban landscape.

Every year your local council plant young trees in our streets to replace trees that have died or become diseased or damaged. Also, local community groups such as Wild Wanstead plant wild flowers in tree pits and vacant open spaces.

Unfortunately, hot dry summers can take their toll, especially so on young recently planted trees and flowers. Though your council will probably arrange for regular watering of new

planting, drought conditions will always kill a few trees and in hot weather flowers are always thirsty. So this year why not adopt a tree or help care for a 'green' patch ?



If you have a young street tree, planted tree pit or space outside or near your house or workplace, we are asking you to water it, please. You may notice a plastic pipe sticking out of the ground next to the tree, usually with a green cap on it. It would be great if you could pour water into the pipe and around the tree pit or patch, whenever you can during the summer months.

If you can water daily, or even once or twice a week with a bucketful it would really help the plants and trees to survive and to become established. To save on precious water use old bath water or other recycled water such as that from the dishwasher or water butt.



Your local Council will of course continue to water newly planted trees as part of their regular maintenance programme but trees give us so much why not give a little back - every little helps.

No-one will object if you water thirsty street trees and plants but if you want to create new planting please get in touch with your local council.

by Tony Morrison



and finally ..

Small Skipper on Wanstead Flats - pic by Lucinda Culpin

Wren Guided Butterfly Walk

While the Big Butterfly Count of 2025 is on, we are leading a walk around Wanstead Park to look for butterflies and to help you identify them.

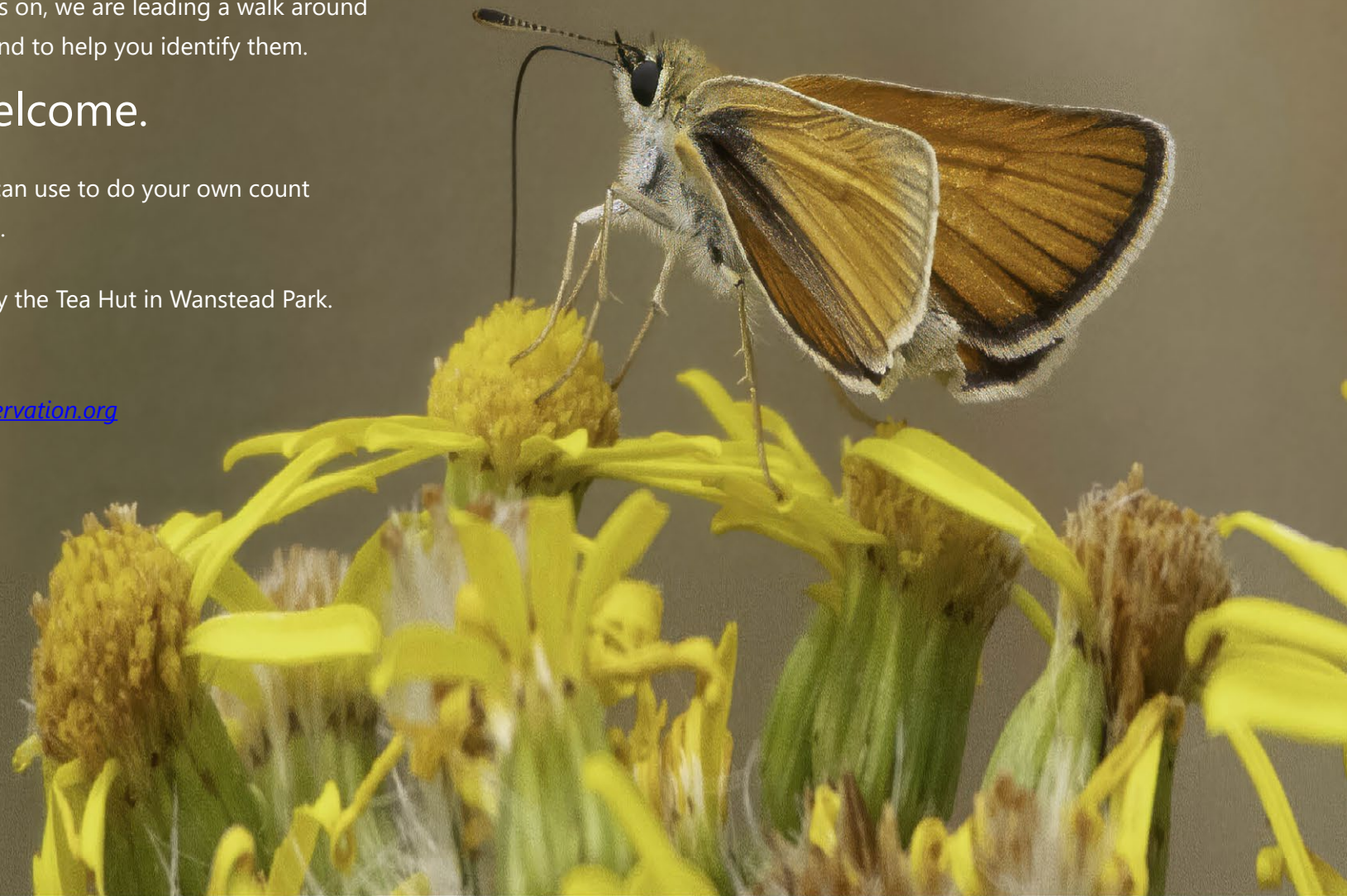
Children & adults welcome.

Handouts will be provided which you can use to do your own count afterwards in your local area or garden.

Saturday 9th August. 10.00am. Meet by the Tea Hut in Wanstead Park.

Link to Butterfly Conservation website:

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org>





.... don't forget

During the breeding season there are millions more hungry mouths to feed. Nesting parents will have to work hard to feed their young, while maintaining their own energy levels.

Also - during current heatwaves water may be hard to come by for our birds as well as other animals. So please put out fresh water every day.

So please keep an eye out for our feathered friends.

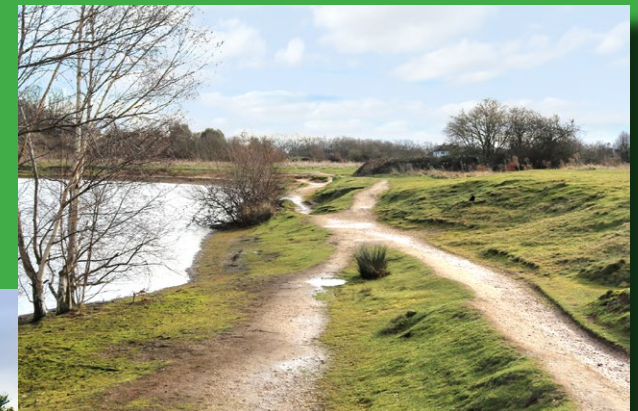
- ☐ Give kitchen scraps like cheese, cooked potato and bread.
- ☐ Clear up uneaten food at the end of the day as it could attract rats.
- ☐ Avoid giving salted nuts and only give peanuts from a good supplier.
- ☐ Clean feeding areas regularly to prevent any disease..

then & now

Were you right ?

Alexandra Lake looking east towards the junction of Forest Drive and Capel Road in 1979 and the same view in 2022.

Grazing by free-ranging cattle continued throughout the 20th century on Wanstead Flats and the surrounding areas but was on a declining trend until the BSE crisis put an end to it in 1996.



links

Wren links page www.wrengroup.org.uk/links

Facebook www.facebook.com/WrenOrg

Twitter <https://twitter.com/wrenwildlife>

Wanstead Wildlife

www.wansteadwildlife.org.uk

Friends of Wanstead Parklands

www.wansteadpark.org.uk

RSPB North East London Members Group

www.rspb.org.uk/groups/northeastlondon

Wanstead Birding Blog

wansteadbirding.blogspot.co.uk

Epping Forest

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/Pages/default.aspx

British Naturalists' Association

www.bna-naturalists.org

Bushwood Area Residents' Association

www.bara-leytonstone.org.uk

East London Nature www.eln.yorkshirefog.co.uk

East London Birders www.elbf.co.uk

Friends of Epping Forest

www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk

East London Nature www.eastlondonnature.co.uk

Plenty of info here about walking in Essex - including the forest
<http://trailman.co.uk>

Wild Wanstead - greening up the local area

www.wildwanstead.org

BBC Nature www.bbc.co.uk/nature

British Naturalists Association

www.bna-naturalists.org

BBC Weather <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather>

Field Studies Council (FSC)

www.field-studies-council.org

London Natural History Society

www.lnhs.org.uk

Natural England www.naturalengland.org.uk

RSPB www.rspb.org.uk/england

UK Safari www.uksafari.com

The British Deer Society www.bds.org.uk

The Wildlife Trust www.wildlifetrusts.org



Egyptian Geese by Tushar