

RNHS

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL PROGRAMME 2024

All events are as detailed and as correct as possible at time of publication but can be subject to change at short notice so please check with up-to-date information in Fieldfare or on the website.

Indoor meetings take place at the LRWT Volunteer training Centre (VTC), between October and April on the first Tuesday of the month between 7.30 – 9.30pm. **(See time of March 14th meeting)**. Meetings may also be held via zoom if appropriate and members will receive a link via email.

For all indoor and outdoor meetings please book your place with Jeff Wilcox-Smith who will give more detailed information. Contact details are at the foot of the programme.

Please note: Outdoor events are likely to be on rough or muddy ground so be sure to wear suitable footwear and clothing and carry drinks and sun cream etc. to suit weather conditions. Indoor meetings are in [green](#). Outdoor meetings in [purple](#).

Tuesday 6th February, 7.30pm. “The eyes have it”. Dave Robinson of the Charnwood group of LRWT talks about the amazing world of vision, defensive colouration and eye mimicry in the animal kingdom.

Saturday 10th February, 10.00am. We may live in England’s smallest county but we are blessed with one of the best nature reserves in the entire country. **Join Craig Howat at Egleton bird watching centre on a birding adventure.**
Meet: In the Egleton reserve car park. Grid ref: SK879 072. You will need a reserve permit for the car park.

Tuesday 5th March, 7.30pm. RNHS Annual General Meeting. After a short A.G.M. we will have something interesting from one of our members. Be sure to grab a seat!

Thursday 14th March, 10.15am - 12.00pm. Join Sarah Lambert for a morning coffee and a talk. Sarah is a Langdyke board member and nature photographer specialising in botany and plant ecology. More information will be available on our website nearer the time.

Saturday 23rd March, 9.30am - 12.30pm. Fort Henry at Exton with RNHS bird recorder Terry Mitcham. A magical gothic folly sitting beside a large lake, lies at the heart of Exton Park. So much to discover in this beautiful Rutland landscape. **Meet:** by the lakes at Fort Henry - plenty of parking on the verges at Grid ref: SK948 119. Best access is along estate road from Exton village, entering Home Farm (SK924 114) and keeping right, following road past Tunnely wood and on to Fort Henry.

Tuesday 9th April, 7.30pm. “How we have increased biodiversity, habitat control, supplementary feeding and predation control”. **Joe Stanley**, head of training and partnerships at the Allerton Project, is passionate about British agriculture, with more sustainable and resilient farming practices. He provoked a lively discussion when he joined us last year, so another interesting evening is ensured.

Saturday 27th April, 10.00am. A walk in Launde Park wood with Sarah Bedford, LRWT conservation officer. Listen with Sarah to the increasing volume of birdsong in this lovely part of Leicestershire. **Meet: SK800 033.** From the Tilton to Oakham road, take any road signposted to Launde. Continue through Launde park with Abbey on left. Park at top of the hill where a public footpath is signed to the right and bridleway to left.

Saturday 4th May. The dawn chorus with Linda and Anthony Biddle. Beat the rising of the sun to hear one of nature's wonders. For details of where and what time to meet, please contact Linda Biddle. Details at foot of the programme.

Saturday 18th May, 10.30am. A walk in Merry's meadows SSSI with Jenny Harris. The retained areas of ridge and furrow, mean that these meadows contain a rich variety of flora, with cowslip, quaking grass, green-winged orchid and adder's tongue to name just a few. **Meet:** Near T-junction opposite Great lane, Greetham, along the Viking way. Grid ref: SK928 155. Postcode LE15 7NG. **The reserve is Grid ref: SK937 157 - some distance away from parking.**

Saturday 8th June, 10.00am. Bioblitz at Oakham. Site and details to follow on website as they become available.

Saturday 29th June, 10.00am. Butterflies in Robert's field with David Vendome of Linclonshire Wildlife Trust. This was once one of the finest butterfly sites in Lincolnshire. The surviving grassland retains characteristic limestone plants including orchid, clustered bellflower and many others. David will tell us of the history of Robert's field and its development. **Meet:** There is roadside parking between Pickworth and Hollywell. Grid ref: TF000 150. Nearest postcode PE9 4DL.

Saturday 20th July, 10.00am. A walk in John Clare country at Swaddywell. John Clare wrote about Swaddywell in the early 20th century, describing the changing landscape. Fourteen species of dragonfly can be found here, along with swallows, house martins and swifts. The quarry would have provided stone for the great cathedrals at Ely and Peterborough. It is owned by The Langdyke Trust. **Meet:** on site. Stamford road, Helpston, PE6 7EL. Grid ref: TF116 031.

Saturday 10th August, 10.30am and 2.00pm. Ketton Quarry Family bug hunt. A day of fun and discovery for the whole family. Discover the flowers, bugs, beetles and butterflies in the quarry. **Park and meet:** in the Scout Hut Car park, Pitt Lane, Ketton. PE9 3SZ. Grid ref: SK979 053.

Sunday 8th September. 6.30pm. Bat walk at the Volunteer Training Centre, (VTC) with Jenny Harris, bat care co-ordinator with Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group. Join Jenny for a night of nocturnal exploration. Bring your bat detectors if you have them, and learn how to identify the different species. (Jenny has spares). We hope to start the evening with a barbecue at the VTC. **Meet:** in the volunteer car park at Grid ref: SK883 083. LE15 8TL.

Tuesday 1st October. 7.30pm. Leicestershire and Rutland beekeepers association (LRBKA). The association has three teaching apiaries of its own in different corners of Leicestershire and is one of the best equipped in the UK, offering training and support to old and new beekeepers alike. This could be the start of a new and absorbing hobby!

Saturday 19th October. 10.00am. Discover Wardley woods in Rutland with Craig Howat. Owned by Forestry England, this is an ancient woodland of 55ha. with some interesting wildlife and fungi. It can be very muddy at this time of the year, so suitable footwear is essential. **Meet:** Park and meet in Wardley village. Grid ref: SK 832 001. **Meeting place may need to be revised so look on the website for possible changes.**

Tuesday 5th November. 7.30pm. A talk by our Vice-President Tim Mackrill. Details nearer the time in Fieldfare or on the website.

Sunday 24th November 10.30am. A trip to Welney wetlands. Always a popular visit with members. Welney takes in 1,000 acres of the Ouse washes, with a variety of hides across the stunning waterscape. Britain's largest area of seasonally-flooded land. **Meet:** In the centre's cafe. There is an admission charge to pay.

Tuesday 3rd December 7.30pm. Members and recorders Meeting. Our usual popular food and festivities evening! Hear all about the highlights of the year from our recorders with photographs, videos and other interesting news from the past few months.

Contact details for indoor and Outdoor events:

L. Biddle. Email: abiddle21@talktalk.net. Mobile: 07749636919. (Dawn chorus only)

J. Wilcox-Smith. Email: wilcoxsmith@btinternet.com. Mobile: 07946733931

C. Baxter. Email: carakas2017@outlook.com. Mobile 07729298125. (From April onwards).