

HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

WINTER PROGRAMME 2022/2023

All meetings start at 7.30pm and are held at the Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Huntingdon. Everyone is welcome: Members free, non-members/guests welcome on payment of £2 (refunded if you join on the night).

Thursday 20th October 2022 Two hundred years of exploring the flora of the Huntingdonshire Fens – Owen Mountfield

The fens from Yaxley and Pondersbridge to Ramsey Heights, Warboys and Somersham, together with the Great Ouse floodplain from Earith to Holywell, represent a fascinating part of the Fenland basin. Relatively late to be discovered by botanists and late to be drained, they include two outstanding National Nature Reserves and the inspired initiative of the Great Fen. In our project to create a Fenland Flora, Jon Graham and I have reconstructed floristic change in the whole of Fenland. In Huntingdonshire, we have drawn on the research of Terry Wells and John Sheail, and have been able to trace the impact of agriculture, drainage and urbanisation on the region from the time of the Marchioness of Huntly and Rev. W.T. Bray, through Thomas Rooper, Alfred Fryer, E.W. Hunnybun and George Claridge Druce to John Gilbert, Terry Wells and Maurice Massey to contemporary botanists such as David Broughton, Neil Crossman and Mick Burton. This talk will describe both the losses in those two centuries and the survivals, as well as the arrival of new species and habitats to the dynamic landscape of 21st century Fenland.

Thursday 10th November 2022 Is it a bird, is it a plane? No.... it's a Wildlife Trust drone – Josh Hellon

Josh Hellon (Wildlife Trust BCN, Monitoring & Research Manager) shows how drone technology is being used to help with the Trust's conservation work. The talk will cover how the Trust map tree species at Brampton Wood, heather at Cooper's Hill, wetland at the Great Fen, and scrub cover at numerous sites. Josh will try to dispel a few myths about drones and show how they can be safely used to give us a bird's eye view of nature reserves. The talk will also cover some of the other technological advancements that are helping with our conservation work.

Thursday 24th November 2022 'Members Christmas Evening'

Please bring some of your wildlife pictures on a disc or memory stick to show as well as specimens etc. and some food to share. Get into the Christmas spirit and enjoy some time to chat and socialise. There will also be a raffle & quiz.

Thursday 19th January 2023 How hot is that butterfly? Using individual temperature responses to inform species conservation – Andrew Bladon

Understanding how individual animals respond to changing temperatures is important for conservation planning in response to climate change. Using temperature data collected from 1,000s of individual butterflies, Andrew will present work from multiple projects investigating how butterflies "buffer" their body temperature against changes in air temperature. By gathering information on how species and populations respond differently to one another, we can predict how butterfly communities might continue to be affected by climate change. Andrew will also discuss an exciting project which is testing, for the first time, conservation actions to protect butterflies, and other invertebrates, against climate change at the reserve scale.

Thursday 16th February 2023 Wildlife of Estonia – Wilf Powell

Estonia has one of the lowest population densities in Europe and has a rich diversity of wildlife. This talk will describe some of that wildlife encountered during six visits made over the last twelve years. Although the country is much smaller than the UK it lies on a geographical crossroads where the faunas of north and south Europe and east and west Europe meet, resulting for example in over 100 butterfly species compared with 59 in the UK. It also lies on a major bird migration route, involving astonishing numbers of birds moving along the coast at peak migration times..

Saturday 25th March 2023 (AGM) The Great Fen, a future wetland and more – Henry Stanier

It's been over 20 years since the launch of the 'Big Idea', as it was originally known. Find out more about this wetland for the future, and it is more than just a wetland. Find out how it all started and the progress we have made, now that we have thousands of hectares under conservation management; including projects on wet farming and climate change. All with the latest stunning photographs and wildlife videos.

For further information about the Society please go to www.hffs.org.uk