

The Wildlife Trust / Beds, Cambs, Northants

April 2025

Spring wildlife to look out for

Frog or toad? Common frogs have two folds of skin down their back, long stripy legs, and a black eye stripe. Their body is a bit angular. Common toads have dry bumpy skin with a rugby-ball shaped bump behind their eye. Their body is more rounded.

Blackthorn or hawthorn? These are both very common hedgerow plants, found on many of our nature reserves. Blackthorn gets its white flowers (yellowish anthers) before its oval leaves, and has dark bark with serious thorns. Hawthorn gets its divided leaves before its white/pink flowers (pinkish anthers). It has thorns, but they are less sturdy than blackthorn. Both are great habitat for farmland birds like yellowhammers.

Early butterflies Some butterflies over-winter as adults so are the first to be seen on warm spring days. Comma, small tortoiseshell, peacock, and brimstone all use this strategy. Other early butterflies are those that have overwintered as a pupa, including holly blue and orange tip.

Orchards look beautiful in April, as the fruit blossom is out and attracting pollinators. There are community orchards at both Trumpington Meadows and Cambourne nature reserves.

Some local events April

- **Monday, 7th April** 9.30 am to 12 noon: Monthly Meander an in-depth, guided walk for adults around Trumpington Meadows.
- **Tuesday, 8th April** 10.00 am to 3.00-ish: drop-in at Trumpington Meadows, come and chat about events, volunteering, and local wildlife. There be some craft activities for kids.
- **Wednesday, 9th April** (Cambourne) and Thurs 10th (Trumpington Meadows), 10.00 am to 12 noon: family wild play.
- **Tuesday, 15th April** 1.00 to 2.15 pm Seasonal Stroll, a short, gentle stroll for adults around Trumpington Meadows.
- **Wednesday, 16th April** (Cambourne) and Thurs 17th (Trumpington Meadows) 10.00 am to 12 noon: family outdoor art .
- **Friday, 25th April** 9.30 am to 11.00-ish weekly Little Bugs pre-school nature toddles / Cambourne.
- **Saturday, 26th April** 10.00 am to 12 noon: Nature and Natter for adults. We'll be making mini-rafts for this session.
- **Saturday, 26th April** 2.00 to 4.00 pm: Wild in the Meadows family session making natural dyes.

Other events can be found on our website: wildlifebcn.org/events

Local enquiries

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General enquiries

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The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs, and Northants is a local wildlife conservation charity aiming to achieve bigger, better, and more joined up habitats for wildlife and people.

We do this by working in partnership to conserve and enhance habitats and biodiversity, and through community work, helping people enjoy, understand, and take action for wildlife.

West Cambridgeshire Hundreds update

Thanks to a grant from the Gamlingay Turbine Tithe Fund, The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants is working with Gamlingay Village Primary to support staff to set up an eco-club. They have decided to name this Nature Ninjas!

The funding will allow staff from The Wildlife Trust BCN to attend meetings with teachers and the community, to get the group off the ground, as well as directly support some sessions. There is also money to spend on resources.

On our initial visit we discussed what the children would like to do. They were very keen to spend time outdoors – and not just in their school grounds, but visiting local green spaces like Millbridge Brook Meadows and Gamlingay Woods. They wanted to do practical activities to protect habitat, and help wildlife, like making bird feeders, and wildlife homes. They were also interested in learning how to identify wildlife, perhaps by doing activities like birdwatching.

Climate change came up in the conversation and they wanted to know more about how to stop it, how it affects things like wildfires and hibernation and also how to help their school community reduce energy use. They were keen to grow things in the school grounds.

It is vital that the group is sustainable beyond the life of the funding – and this means support is needed from the community. Over the next few months, we'll be connecting with Climate Action Gamlingay and Gamlingay Allotment Gardeners Association, but we'd love to hear from locals who are keen to help out; perhaps you have skills, resources or money that might be useful. Please get in touch: rebecca.neal@wildlifebcn.org.