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Essex
Wildlife Trust

Uttlesford Local Group

Welcome to the new email Newsletter from the Uttlesford Local Group of Essex Wildlife Trust, which supports the work of the Essex Wildlife Trust by organising work parties to maintain the nature reserves in our area.

It may seem odd, but nature reserves do need looking after, and we cannot 'leave it to nature' because if we did the reserves would gradually lose species and diversity, both of plants and animals. We manage the habitats to keep as much variation as possible, so that there are places for many things to find their home. For example, If we did not manage the woodlands then larger trees would shade out the smaller trees, and the woodland flowers, and without those there would be no homes for butterflies. Similar things happen in grasslands too, and we continue the kind of traditional meadow mowing which produces a wide range of plant species.

Our work party season runs from late summer to late spring, right through the winter, beginning with meadow mowing, and then moving on to coppicing the woodlands. We meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 9:30 a.m. and noon, and this year the season began on August 15th at West Wood and continues around the other reserves after that.

The Essex Wildlife Trust website has a page about our Local Group here,

<https://www.essexwt.org.uk/support-us/get-involved/local-groups/uttlesford>

but it can only provide a limited amount of information, so for more detail we run our own website at <https://www.uttlesford-wildlife.org.uk> where you will find full details of

like to join in with our work parties then please send an email to volunteering@essexwt.org.uk and the Trust's Volunteer Coordinator will help you to register and put you in touch with our group.



Wildflowers in our Harrison Sayer nature reserve

[View Upcoming Events](#)

Summer in the Nature Reserves

We tell each other about the weather all the time, and this year there has certainly been much to talk about, with unusual cool and wet conditions, but has this been a bad year for wildlife?

It has been a very good year for butterflies, as recorded by some of our volunteers who have been surveying them in West Wood and Shadwell Wood. Numbers have been high, and Purple Hairstreak was seen in Shadwell Wood, a rare record. A photo of Purple Emperor was also taken there, a first record for this wood. In gardens

Elephant Hawkmoth was photographed.



Butterflies need sunshine to fly, but they also need rain and good growing conditions for the food plants that their caterpillars feed upon. A hot dry year with droughts is not good for plants, and in turn this impacts upon the success of the adult butterflies. So a cooler damper summer has its benefits too.

Tree planting also benefits from damper summers, and in recent dry years many of the trees which we have planted have not survived due to a lack of water. In our woodland nature reserves last winter we planted some Small-leaved Lime trees, to replace the Ash trees which we have lost due to Ash Dieback Disease, and happily they have taken well this summer and are growing. It will be some time before they are large enough to be casting shade.

Future Newsletters

We are not planning to bombard you with a regular series of Newsletters, but if anything of note occurs in our nature reserves we will try to pass on any good news.



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