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**Essex**  
Wildlife Trust

## Uttlesford Local Group

### News from the Reserves October 2023

Since our last Newsletter the industrious members of the Work Party have visited each of our local nature reserves in turn to carry out the autumnal grass cutting. If you have a lawn you may have noticed how well it grew this summer, and how often it had to be cut. The same has been true of the grasslands which we look after, but without any mowing in the summertime ( deliberately done to allow the wildflowers time to set seed ) the height of the sward which had to be removed was considerable. We followed a complicated timetable which involved mowers being moved to reserves ahead of the raking-up work party, who followed a few sessions behind, to allow the cut grass time to dry out, but it was still very heavy to rake up and remove. This has to be done to prevent nutrients from building up, which would only benefit invasive species like Nettles and coarse grasses. To keep a variety of wildflowers present the nutrients need to be kept in short supply.

I could show you pictures of people hard at work in the field, but this is supposed to be a Newsletter about wildlife, so instead here are some pictures of things which have been seen on the reserves over the past few weeks and months. From top left and going anti-clockwise; Parasol Mushroom *Lepiota procera*; Magpie Inkcap, *Coprinus picaceus*; An abandoned bird's nest - probably Blue Tit or great Tit ( the eggs were cold, we did check before moving it); an unidentified large fungus; A tree in Turner's Spring covered in Dryad's Saddle fungus; and a Painted Lady butterfly ( thanks to Marten Rae for this ).



So, we call it a Work Party, and we do get the work done, but it is not all hard work and we take time to see lots of wildlife by being out on the reserves through the seasons, and we learn how the various wildlife species live their lives through the year. The more we see, and hear, the more we can identify - with the exception of fungi which are very difficult.

In the next few weeks we will begin the annual coppice work in West Wood and Shadwell Wood, continuing the rotation of coppicing that has moved around these woods for centuries, and which has given them the variety of species which they still have today. If you would like to join us out on the nature reserves we meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 9.30 and Noon, and our programme is on the Uttlesford Wildlife website here

<https://www.uttlesford-wildlife.org.uk/things-to-do/volunteer/essex-wildlife-trust/>

To register as a volunteer please contact [volunteering@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@essexwt.org.uk) both to register and to receive information. There is a page about Volunteering on the Essex Wildlife Trust website at

<https://www.essexwt.org.uk/volunteer-hub>

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