



Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

TALKS PROGRAMME September 2023 – June 2024



18th September
2023

WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION ON THE CROWN ESTATE Des Sussex, Biodiversity & Conservation Manager at the Windsor Estate, will describe the diversity of habitats within the Great Park, Swinley Forest, Swinley Park and Buttersteep Forest and the richness of the wildlife found there. He will also touch on the pressures and demands on the land. *Our AGM will precede the talk.*

23rd October
2023

BEAVERS IN BRITAIN – Restoring a Native Species Hunted to extinction around 400 years ago, Beavers were once a common species in our waterways, shaping our rivers, streams and wetlands. With their restoration well underway, including recently in the London area, could they help battle the current biodiversity and climate crisis? **Rob Needham** from the Beaver Trust will reveal all.

20th November
2023

COCKATOOS AND KOOKABURRAS – The Birds of Sydney's Suburbs Australia's birds are often big, bold and very loud... their behaviour can be completely different from that of our familiar British birds. Join bird expert and regular BTO and BBOWT volunteer **Ailsa Claybourn** to hear about colourful garden birds, tiny Fairy Wrens, a Kookaburra on a washing-line, what Cockatoos do to fairylights and why it's not your chips that birds will try to pinch if you're sitting outside an Australian café.

11th December
2023

THE WATERWAYS OF BRACKNELL The waterways of Bracknell drain mostly to the north, to the Thames at Bray. However, our local river, The Cut, and its tributaries are often passed unnoticed. BFNHS Member and local stalwart **Colin Bird** will explore the routes and history of these streams and rivers within the landscape.

15th January
2024

SILKY SNARES AND INJECTED VENOM – An exploration of Spiders Eton College's Natural History Museum is one of Berkshire's hidden gems. Opened in 1875 and housing over 17,000 objects, it's a perfect place to explore and learn more about the natural world. Until you can make that visit, Curator **Dr George Fussey** will bring some of the Museum to us and open up the fascinating world of the spider.

19th February
2024

'BLACKWATER VALLEY NATURE WALKS' – an adventure born out of lockdown **Colin Wilson** has been a Trustee of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust for 15 years and during lockdown he used his extensive knowledge of the area to create 'Blackwater Valley Nature Walks', a website that has been visited a quarter of a million times since 2020. His journey led to a book which sold out within a year, providing a resource to help local people connect with our abundant nature.

18th March 2024

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION IN ACTION – an introduction to Ealing Wildlife Group Wildlife presenter, conservationist and naturalist **Dr Sean McCormack** hosts his own wildlife podcast and YouTube channel and runs the growing conservation organisation Ealing Wildlife Group, which he set up in 2016. He has engaged the local community with wildlife and green spaces and now the group has over 3,700 members to safeguard and improve habitats for nature and urban wildlife. Come and be inspired!

15th April 2024

BLACK-BACKED JACKALS – Unlocking the Secrets of their success Many social predators are thought to accrue fitness benefits by hunting co-operatively. However, few studies have shown conclusively that these benefits are influenced by group size. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that individual group members coordinate roles during a hunting event. This study, by Berkshire College of Agriculture researcher **Jack Merrifield**, aims to elucidate factors influencing various aspects of co-operative hunting by Black-Backed Jackals in the Namibian Desert.

20th May 2024

UNDERSTANDING ALIEN SPECIES THROUGH CITIZEN SCIENCE Citizen Science is seen as key to providing information about alien species, particularly those which are invasive - and to inform action to prevent them becoming established in countries, or to reduce their spread and impact. **Dr Helen Roy** from the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology explains how the collaborative network of over 40 countries has mobilised public interest in monitoring alien species through engaging communication materials and events.

See more over

Talks continued
17th June 2024

BRITISH WILD ORCHIDS Professor Mike Fay is a Senior Research Leader in conservation genetics at Kew Gardens and also a world expert on orchids. With 52 species native to the UK, most flowering between May and June, Mike will guide us through the common and widespread to the rarer ones - and tell their fascinating story.

Our illustrated talks are held on a Monday each month (September to June)
at 7:30pm in the Recital Room, South Hill Park, Ringmead, Bracknell RG12 7PA

Also in the pipeline:

11th February **A Birdwatching Trip to RSPB Pagham Harbour** Join us for a guided walk around this peaceful nature reserve on the West Sussex coast - to see large numbers of Brent Geese, Lapwings and Black Tailed Godwits in the surrounding fields; and Plovers, Dunlins and possibly Red Breasted Mergansers in the Harbour.

24th March **A Trip to the Eton Natural History Museum** Following on from our talk in January, join us for an afternoon exploring this hidden treasure trove of the natural world. Highlights include an extensive collection of fossils from the Pre Cambrian era onwards; The Thackeray Collection of British Birds; a Herbarium containing 4,000 pressed plants from the early 19th century, a two headed Kitten, a four-footed Duck; and an overstuffed Platypus known as Fattypus!

22nd June **A Guided Orchid Walk** An excursion around Bracknell to find Orchids, including the stunning Bee Orchid.

***If you haven't yet RE-JOINED THE
SOCIETY, now's the time to do it!***

Our Membership Year runs from 1st September each year, but any applications received now will be valid until the end of August 2024

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP remains the same: £12. Members' Entrance Fee is £1.

Visitors are always very welcome – **VISITORS' ENTRANCE FEE IS £3**

HOW TO PAY

PAY ON THE DAY...

You can pay (£12 per person) with cash or by a cheque made out to **Bracknell Forest Natural History Society** at any of our Meetings.

PAY ELECTRONICALLY

If you wish to pay your Annual Subscription electronically, or to set up an annual Standing Order, our Lloyds Bank details are:

Account Name: Bracknell Forest Natural History Society
Account Number: 03481989 **Sort Code:** 30-91-11

IMPORTANT When you pay online, please make sure you also contact our Treasurer - whose email address is johnwilliams288@hotmail.com - with your name, address, telephone number and email address **to identify your payment and ensure that we have a complete record of your details for communication purposes.**