



Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

TALKS PROGRAMME September 2024 – June 2025



PREVIEW

16th September
2024

LEARN MORE ABOUT ETON'S SWAN LIFELINE Cindy Smulders, a Trustee at Eton's Swan Lifeline charity will tell us about the vital work they do to rescue and treat sick and injured swans and return them to the wild as soon as possible. Pollution and human activities are affecting swans and other wildfowl but the Centre provides education and training services to empower communities, Fire and Rescue Services, Police and volunteers to make a difference and help our wildlife.

21st October
2024

THE FLOWER RICH HABITATS OF WESTERN CRETE Dr Brian Ferry of Royal Holloway College will share with us the rich variety of habitats and the huge variety of wildflowers, ranging from lowland, coastal and wooded landscapes, to high altitude alpine regions - with some mountain gorges near-vertical. It is not surprising that the native flora of Crete exceeds that of the UK and nearly 10% is endemic to the island.

18th November
2024

FROM WALKING WITH WOMBATS TO RESCUING A KOALA... Maria Island, Tasmania, has become an island reclaimed by wildlife. BBC Wildlife Magazine author and wildlife photographer **Ross Gurden** will share and illustrate his experiences on the island and also fantastic nuggets of his time travelling across the vast continent of Australia, in search of its unique and varied wildlife.

16th December
2024



SAVING THE STONE CURLEW The Stone Curlew is a special bird of the North Wessex Downs, where it breeds in small numbers. This summer migrant naturally chooses to nest on downland, but usually has to opt for arable farms instead. Bird expert **Keith Betton** explains how efforts to help this rare species have worked and explains much of its secretive lifestyle.

20th January
2025

AN INTRODUCTION TO TRACKS AND SIGNS: the Naturalist's Forgotten Skill
The ability to accurately identify and interpret tracks and signs relies on a body of traditional knowledge that previous generations of naturalists would have regarded as fundamental. Sadly, it is now largely unknown and untaught, but with the upsurge of citizen science it is perhaps more relevant than ever. Expert **Bob Cowley** from the Oxfordshire Mammal Group will give us some excellent guidelines!

17th February
2025

SOME GOOD NEWS ABOUT SNAILS AND SLUGS Although some snails and slugs are damaging to our garden plants, the majority do more good than harm. **Dr Tom Walker**, a Member of the Conchological Society, will elucidate on various topics involving molluscs, ranging from conservation, food, archaeology, introductions and extinctions, 'alien' species, art, and more. He will also bring along a selection of shells, ranging from the large to the very small.

17th March 2025

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF THE NEW FOREST The New Forest National Park is home to all six of the UK's native reptile species. Forestry England's **Richard Daponte** works with the New Forest Reptile Centre to help protect rare snakes and lizards and encourage reintroductions across the country. He will talk about the Centre and its work, the reptiles and amphibians indigenous to the forest and the important conservation going on to save these rare and secretive animals.

14th April 2025

LOOKING FOR THE GOSHAWK – THE LOST RAPTOR Writer and naturalist **Conor Mark Jameson** will give a personal, narrative account of the natural history of this mystery-shrouded bird of prey: how it lives, where it lives, and why it might be missing from our lives. His search took him to some unexpected places, at home and abroad. Conor's talk focuses on the adventure that turned his essay, which won BBC Wildlife Nature Writer of the Year, into a book which received a coveted Roger Deakin Award.

19th May 2025

ECUADOR AND THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS Nature Trek's **Andy Tucker** will explore the richness of mainland Ecuador, from the moss-laden cloudforests of the north-west, to the high Andes and the lowlands of the Amazon in the east. The talk will feature stunning photography of iconic species such as Cock of the Rock, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Giant Anteater, Torrent Duck and Hoatzin. He will then move on to the Enchanted Islands, covering the geological history and geography of the archipelago, the Darwin story, current conservation issues and the visitor experience - featuring seabird and sealion colonies, giant tortoises, marine and land iguanas, penguins and more!

See more over

Talks continued

16th June 2025

SAVING THE STAG BEETLE The UK's largest land beetle is the spectacular stag beetle, but they are in decline. The People's Trust for Endangered Species is fighting to save it and their resident expert **David Wembridge** will inform us what they are doing, how you can help and provide lots of stag beetle facts such as where they live, what they eat - and their life cycles.

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:

9th February 2025 Birdwatching Trip to Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve With abundant habitats such as the River Meon, canals, reedbeds and water meadows there will be plenty to spot in this tranquil haven for wildlife. There are many hides around the site from where you might see turnstone, curlew, shelduck, avocet, snipe, marsh harrier and water rail, amongst many more Winter visitors.

11th May Visit to New Forest Wildlife Centre Join us for an unforgettable wildlife experience in the heart of the beautiful New Forest. With many UK natives such as barn owls, Eurasian otters, badgers, pine martins, Scottish wildcats to once native bison, lynx and grey wolves, there will be plenty to see and photograph! The Wildlife Park is dedicated to conservation projects such as rehabilitation and breeding programmes - so our visit will help carry on this vital work.

Details of our guided **Spring and Summer Wildlife Walks** will be available soon.

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

Our Membership Year runs from 1st September annually, so payment is due now.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP remains the same for the

2024-25 year: £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. At the same time please also fill out our New Member's Form which will be handed to you.

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.***