

MILTON KEYNES NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



MKNHS PROGRAMME – AUTUMN 2026

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER

Meetings are held at the Cruck Barn, City Discovery Centre, Alston Drive, Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes, MK13 9AP on Tuesdays at 7.30pm for 8.00pm. Visitors are very welcome. Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served free of charge. Cups are provided, but you are encouraged to bring your own if you can.

Please note that clause 7 of the Society's constitution reads: 'the Society will exercise due care when arranging its meetings and activities for the benefit of members. Members taking part in any meeting or activity do so at their own risk.'

September

01 No Meeting

08 No Meeting

15 MEMBERS' EVENING

Your opportunity to speak to members for 10-15 mins about interesting wildlife sightings or experiences you have had over the summer. If you'd like a 'slot', contact Linda Murphy in advance or at the start of the meeting.

22 FROM BEATRIX POTTER TO OUTER SPACE: THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF LICHENS

Lichens have travelled a remarkable path through science, culture, and even space. **Jagoda Zajac**, Society Webmaster and Lichen enthusiast, will explore how these quiet, overlooked organisms have captured attention from Beatrix Potter's early scientific studies to modern laboratories, revealing a world where resilience, creativity, and unexpected usefulness meet. Along the way, we'll learn about some of the surprising roles which lichens have played in human history and the natural world.

NB This talk will be preceded by a brief Special General Meeting of the Society

29 PLASTICS IN OUR OCEANS (Zoom Meeting)

Vicki Bush, Senior Education and Community Officer (Marine Specialist) Gibraltar Point LWT/NNR will join us via Zoom to talk about what is happening with plastics in our oceans and to our wildlife. Find out a little more about the situation, what impacts we see in Lincolnshire and what we can do about it.

October

06 LOOKING FOR THE GOSHAWK – THE LOST RAPTOR

Writer, naturalist and conservationist **Conor 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 takes him to some unexpected places, at home and abroad. This adventure turned into an essay which won BBC Wildlife Nature Writer of the Year in 2010, and subsequent book.

A sub-plot in this story brings him to Buckinghamshire, on the trail of T H White, author of *The Goshawk* (and *The Sword in the Stone*, etc). His Goshawk story centres on a cottage in a wood, and Conor set out to try to find it...

13 MEMBERS' EVENING

Another opportunity to speak to members for 10-15 mins about interesting wildlife sightings, experiences or issues you'd like to share with other members. If you'd like a 'slot', contact Linda Murphy in advance or at the start of the meeting.

20 REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Agni Arampoglou and Claudia Bernardini from the Bucks Amphibian and Reptile Group (Bucks ARG) will talk about Reptiles and Amphibians in Buckinghamshire, some of the challenges they face and the work of the Bucks Amphibian and Reptile Group.

27 VOICES IN THE MIST: A CURLEW RECOVERY TALE FROM OTMOOR

David Wilding is Site Manager at RSPB Otmoor. His talk will look at work done on the Upper Thames Tributaries to save the curlew, with a particular focus on the RSPB's work in the Otmoor Basin.

November

03 ASTONISHING COSTA RICA – PART 1

Society member **Justin Long** takes us on a journey across Costa Rica - one of the most fascinating and biodiverse countries in the world, sharing his photos of this remarkable country, and the astonishing wildlife he encountered along the way.

10 EMBERTON COUNTRY PARK

Samuel Flowers, Manager of Emberton Country Park, will talk about the history of the park and the wide range of wildlife that can be found there. He will also explain plans for a Bioblitz next year, and how you can get involved.

17 THE END-CRETACEOUS MASS EXTINCTION AND THE ORIGIN OF MODERN BIRD DIVERSITY (Zoom Meeting)

Daniel Field is an evolutionary biologist and palaeontologist interested in the evolution of birds and other vertebrates, particularly how, when, and where Earth's

modern vertebrate biodiversity arose. He is the Professor of Vertebrate Palaeontology in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge. He joins us via Zoom this evening to explain how new fossil discoveries cast light on the evolutionary refinement of the distinctive features of modern birds, and the origin of the modern bird group itself. These discoveries help illustrate the role of the end-Cretaceous mass extinction in kickstarting the evolutionary diversification of modern birds.

24 QUIZ NIGHT

Once again **Ann and Mark Strutton** will test our grey matter with an array of taxing questions, all with a natural history twist. Teams of four or more will be assigned on the evening. Please bring your own refreshments (and brain power).

December

01 THE NOTHING YEAR (Zoom Meeting)

Colin Smith has been trapping and studying the moths of Lincolnshire for many years and will join us on Zoom tonight to show us the variety of moths found through the seasons in that County and talk about the seasonal adaptations they have evolved and how they cope and change with the differing weather patterns. Lincolnshire is not so far from Milton Keynes and so a lot will be relevant to this area too.

08 FARMING THE LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Martin Lines farms arable crops in South Cambridgeshire and leads the Nature Friendly Farming Network. This involves him in working with farmers, government, retailers and the finance sector. This evening he will give a brief overview of current farming policy and the challenges facing farmers, before looking at how we move towards a farming landscape and business model that delivers for food production, nature and future generations. Martin will draw on practical examples from his own farm and the wider Nature Friendly Farming Network to show what that can look like in practice.

15 CHRISTMAS PARTY

A chance for us all to socialise, relax and reflect on the past year with some good food and drinks. We will circulate a list in the preceding weeks so that you can tell us what dish you can bring along!

Next meeting: Tuesday 5th January 2027