

# A Saturday of Wildlife 2020

15 Wildlife Talks of 15 minutes each



**London Natural History Society & FSC**

**Saturday 27 June 2020, 9.00am - 4.30pm**

Swedenborg Hall, Swedenborg House, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2TH



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# A Saturday of Wildlife 2020: Programme Summary

Doors open	09.00am
<b>Panel 1: Chair, Pippa Jacks</b>	<b>09.30am-10.30am</b>
Introduction, welcome and admin points by Pippa Jacks	
<b>1</b> Mark Spencer, Whither London's wild flowers	
<b>2</b> Nick Rutter, Wildlife of Morden Hall Park	
<b>3</b> Tony Wileman, Urban Jewel – the story of Camley Street Natural Park	
Break	
<b>Panel 2: Chair, Nick Rutter</b>	<b>10.45am-11.45am</b>
<b>4</b> David Allen, The Evolution of the Field Guide	
<b>5</b> Stephanie West, Gilbert White in London	
<b>6</b> Michael Fay, Six continents: five years: one big plant book	
Break	
<b>Panel 3: Chair, Sally Middleton</b>	<b>12.00pm-1.00pm</b>
<b>7</b> Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne, Top Wildlife Sites in London	
<b>8</b> Keiron Brown, Recording London's Wildlife	
<b>9</b> Clive Herbert, Finding Mammals in London	
Lunch Break	
<b>Panel 4: Chair, Gaye Henson</b>	<b>2.00pm-3.00pm</b>
<b>10</b> Pippa Jacks, Wildlife Safari in Sri Lanka	
<b>11</b> Shahina Ghazenfar, Earliest botanical gardens in the Middle East	
<b>12</b> Robert Prys-Jones, Saga of the Large-billed Reed Warbler	
Break	
<b>Panel 5: Chair, Liz Andrew</b>	<b>3.15pm-4.15pm</b>
<b>13</b> Maria Longley, London's Changing Wildlife	
<b>14</b> Richard Bullock, Wild Orchids in London	
<b>15</b> Edwin Malins, Changing of the Guard – the butterflies of London	
Wrap up by Pippa Jacks	Event finish 4.30pm

## Organisers



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Swedenborg House is home to Swedenborg Hall: a stunning neoclassical lecture theatre. Built around 1760, Swedenborg House was originally a dwelling house. The freehold was acquired by the Swedenborg Society in 1924. It is a four-storey Grade II-listed building in the heart of Bloomsbury, central London, just a short walk from the British Museum and the London Review Bookshop. There are many bus routes, trains and tube stations close to it. There are several fast food outlets for food and drink and a number of lovely London garden squares are within walking distance.

**Tubes:** Holborn (Central Line), Tottenham Court Road (Central Line & Northern Line).



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# Saturday of Wildlife 2020: Event Overview

The event comprises of 15 talks of 15 minutes each, on a wide range of natural history topics spanning botany, birds, butterflies, mammals, books, reserve management, wildlife recording, top wildlife sites and taxonomy. The majority of talks are UK or London-centric, with a few of the talks focused on foreign regions. The speakers are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and many represent British institutions and conservation charities which are world-leaders in research and conservation.

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This not a scientific conference but the depth and content is aimed at adults with a serious interest in natural history. The talks are broken into 5 panels with 15 minute intervals and a 1 hour lunch break to give time for attendees to network. No food and drink is provided, but there are many food options locally. See the accompanying slides for more information.

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# Details of Speakers and Topics



London Natural History Society & FSC

## Pippa Jacks



Pippa is the Group Editor at TTG Media, which publishes Travel Trade Gazette and other travel and tourism-related magazines. Her love of wildlife and birding has seen her visit and write about wildlife destinations ranging from Guyana and the Galapagos to Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Botswana. She is a RSPB volunteer, a WWT member, and a Committee Member of the London Bird Club – for which she also acts as Instagram Editor. She appears regularly on TV and radio as a travel expert and has moderated panel discussions at tourism conferences around the world.

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## Mark Spencer, Whither London's wild flowers?



London is often described as one of the greenest cities in the world. Unfortunately, all is not well. Many of London's wild plants are in serious decline. The city is also seeing a steady increase in the abundance of invasive plant species. London's grasslands are particularly suffering, many are being mown too often, allowed to vanish under encroaching bramble or having trees planted on them. As conservationists, we are often told 'be positive' - sadly this strategy has failed, it is time to inform people clearly about what is really happening to London's most valuable natural heritage.

Mark's life-long passion for plants was fuelled by a childhood spent wandering the Lizard peninsula, Cornwall and the Northamptonshire countryside. After 12 years as a senior curator at the Natural History Museum London, Mark is now an independent consultant botanist specialising in forensics. Mark is the honorary botany curator at the Linnean Society of London, the Botanical Society of the British Isles vice-county recorder for Middlesex and the Vascular Plant Recorder for the London Natural History Society.



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## Nik Rutter, Wildlife of Morden Hall Park



Morden Hall Park is a National Trust property in south London. An active group of volunteers monitors its wildlife, including birds, butterflies and other insects, freshwater invertebrates and eels, and participates in a varied programme of public engagement activities. In this talk, Nick Rutter, a member of the group, will describe some of the wildlife that can be found there, and review the ways that volunteers can carry out valuable monitoring work and increase public engagement with nature.

Nick lives in south London and edits *The London Naturalist*, the journal of the London Natural History Society. He is also a regular contributor to the London Bird Report. Nick is also a director of BB 2000 Limited, the company that publishes *British Birds* magazine. Having lived in Sussex for many years before moving to London, Nick is a retired solicitor and remains the honorary legal adviser to the Sussex Ornithological Society. He is using his retirement to travel widely around the world in search of birds and other wildlife.



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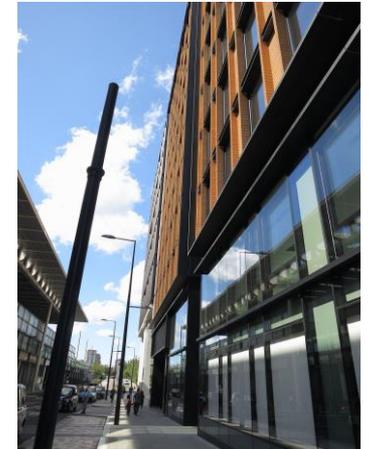
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## Tony Wileman, Urban Jewel – the story of Camley Street Natural Park



Camley Street Natural Park in King's Cross is one of the LWT's early conservation success stories when it was saved from being lost to the International rail development at Kings Cross/St Pancras. For three decades it has been an important site to introduce nature to children and adults alike to appreciate that urban wildlife is all around them. 2020 sees a new and ambitious visitor experience being opened after the site was closed for 2 years. Tony will introduce this urban oasis and nature reserve with a wealth of history in the centre of a bustling metropolitan area. He will talk about how bringing wildlife even into the heart of the city can be achieved when given the opportunity.

Tony Wileman is a trained ecologist working for the London Wildlife Trust with over 25 years experience in nature conservation. His interest in birds spans 37 years and he has travelled to five continents watching and recording them. He has a particular interest in species to species and habitat interactions and is passionate about ensuring wildlife in all its forms obtains a voice for its preservation.



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### Nick Rutter



Nick lives in south London and edits *The London Naturalist*, the journal of the London Natural History Society. He is also a regular contributor to the *London Bird Report*. Nick is also a director of BB 2000 Limited, the company that publishes *British Birds* magazine. Having lived in Sussex for many years before moving to London, Nick is a retired solicitor and remains the honorary legal adviser to the Sussex Ornithological Society. He is using his retirement to travel widely around the world in search of birds and other wildlife.

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## David Allen, The Evolution of the Field Guide



A quick review of field guides and their history. Portable field guides arrived on the scene fairly late in the day, in the mid 20th century – after binoculars but before mobile phones – during the lifetime of some of us. From birds and flowers to an increasing range of wildlife, what is the current coverage and how practical are the various guides? Are you wedded to your smartphone? Are your interests so wide you need a wheelbarrow for your books? What is the fashionable title to be seen with, and does that matter?

David Allen is the London Natural History Society's Librarian. He is a knowledge management specialist with over 50 years professional experience. He has worked at the digitisation of the historical bird and botany records in association with GiGL and has been involved in digitising the content of the London Naturalist.



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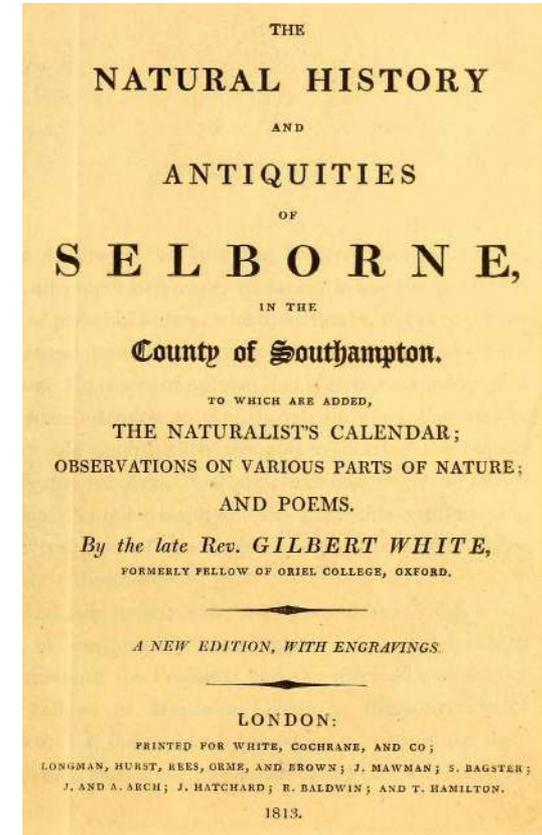
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## Stephanie West, Discovering Gilbert White in London



18th July 2020 marks what would have been Gilbert White's 300th birthday. In conjunction with events that are marking his tercentenary, Stephanie has been looking at what brought Gilbert to London so often, where in London he visited, what he recorded while he was here, and how things have changed. Stephanie will also introduce the Angela Marmont Centre in the Natural History Museum. AMC. The AMC provides support for naturalists studying British wildlife, geology & palaeontology. She will explain how the AMCs offer to all levels of wildlife recorders has developed over nearly 10 years.

Steph is the UK Biodiversity Training Manager at the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Biodiversity. She is a keen biological recorder, specialising in bats, but also particularly passionate about sharing and communicating the wonders of the natural world, particularly for UK wildlife. She has always been inspired by the history of biological recording, particularly Gilbert White and his connection to all modern amateur biological recorders.



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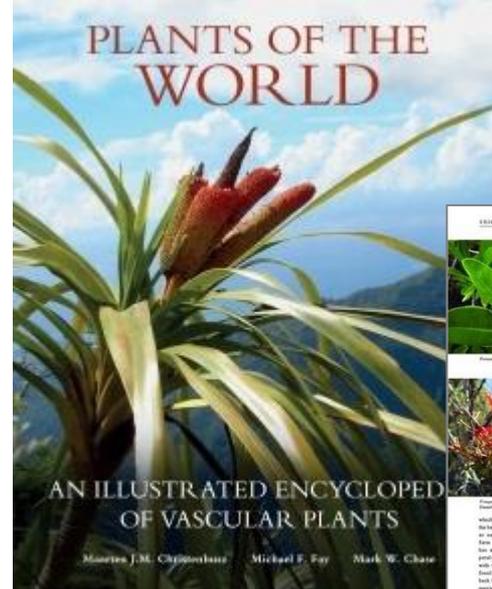
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# Michael Fay, Six continents: five years: one big plant book



Plants of the World (2017) is the first pictorial encyclopedia to cover all families of vascular plants in a modern phylogenetic classification. In the process of collecting information and images for the book, Mike and his co-authors Maarten Christenhusz and Mark Chase travelled the world, visiting all continents, except Antarctica, and many oceanic islands, enduring tropical diseases, parasites and altitude sickness, avoiding crocodiles and poisonous snakes and surviving robberies, volcanoes and earthquakes.



Michael Fay is Senior Research Leader in Conservation Genetics at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where he has worked for more than 30 years. He is Chair of the Orchid Specialist Group of IUCN and Chief Editor of the Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society. Much of his research has focused on sorting out the relationships of poorly understood plants from around the world, using modern DNA-based techniques.

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### Sally Middleton



Sally Middleton has always had a love of nature which led her to study Biology at university. Although she works in finance in the city, she has been a keen birder for the last five years. She spends most weekends birdwatching either in the UK or abroad, and volunteers for the RSPB and LNHS. She manages the MeetUp group for the LNHS and is on the committee of the London Bird Club.

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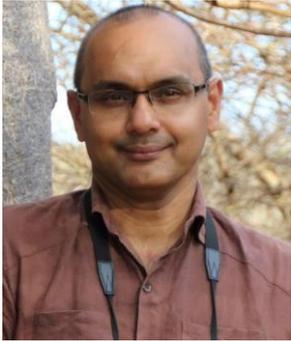
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## Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne, Top Wildlife Sites in London



London is one of the greatest capital's in the world for wildlife tourism. It has a fantastic network of urban nature reserves with superb visitor facilities and hides for photographers. London is also a hub for wildlife enthusiasts with several clubs and societies organising talks and field visit. London is also transport hub for easy day trips to a range of habitats in Britain. Gehan introduces some of the best urban wildlife sites in the world and provides tips on how to get the best out of what London offers.

Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne is the Chair of the London Bird Club. He grew up in Sri Lanka. In the words of Bill Oddie, no single individual has done so much to publicise a country for its wildlife as Gehan has done with Sri Lanka. He was the first to publicise Sri Lanka as being 'Best for Blue Whale', develop the island's potential for leopard safaris and to brand the 'Elephant Gathering'. He looks at London with fresh eyes and sees it as a good wildlife destination.



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## Keiron Brown, Recording London's Wildlife



Volunteer biological recorders and citizen science projects are pivotal to our understanding of species distributions and assessing conservation status. They help us monitor the effects of climate change and threats from non-native invasive species. Keiron Brown takes us through some of the ways people can contribute to London recording initiatives, ranging from projects that require no experience at all to calls to action for experienced recorders.

**Keiron Derek Brown** first became interested in invertebrates during a field-based entomology module at university and went on to volunteer on soil biodiversity research projects at the Natural History Museum (London). This included sorting samples of invertebrates to order level and sampling invertebrates across the New Forest in Hampshire and the Malaysian rainforests of Borneo. Keiron now manages the FSC BioLinks project, with the aim of inspiring amateur naturalists to take up the identification and recording of invertebrate groups that are often forgotten and rarely recorded.



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## Clive Herbert, Finding Mammals in London



The Greater London area is surprisingly rich for mammals. Urban foxes and introduced Grey Squirrels may be the most familiar but did you know that 12 species of bats are found in the Capital and Water Voles, the fastest declining UK mammal, can still be seen in London's waterways? This talk is about the diversity of London's mammals and where to find them.



Clive has been the LNHS Mammal Recorder for the past 25 years and is on the Council of the Society. He has been a keen birder (UK 375 and London list 226 species) and mammal watcher all his life, being a founder member of the London Bat Group in the 1980s. He has undertaken mammal and herpetofauna research, and published numerous papers in the London Naturalist. He runs his own ecological consultancy specialising in mammals, herpetofauna and the management of their habitats.

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### Gaye Henson



Gaye has been a keen birdwatcher for many years but retirement a few years ago has provided the opportunity to spend more time to indulge in getting outdoors and enjoying nature and wildlife in general. Apart from birdwatching in and around London she also enjoys birdwatching further afield both in the UK and abroad. Her local patch for birdwatching is Highgate Woods and Hampstead Heath. She is a member of the RSPB and WWT. She is on the committee of the Marylebone Birdwatching Society and organises their indoor talks meetings and also represents birdwatchers on Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

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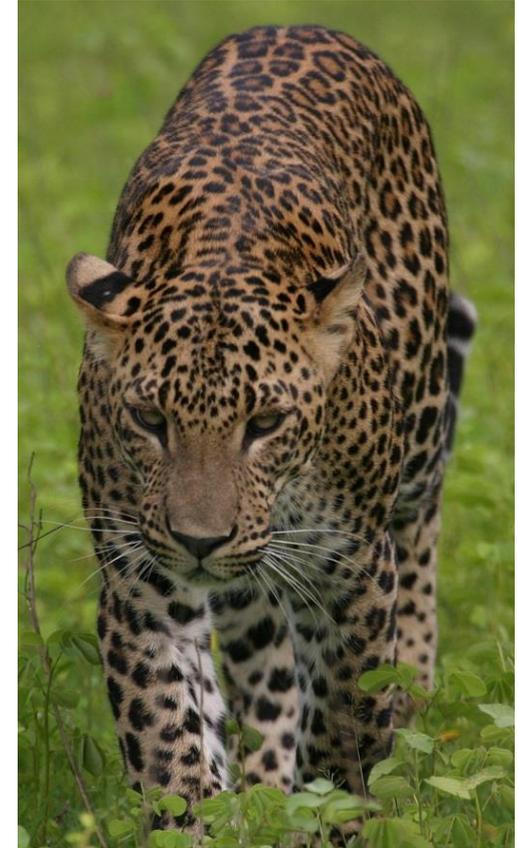
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## Pippa Jacks, Wildlife Safari in Sri Lanka



Pippa is the Group Editor at TTG Media, which publishes Travel Trade Gazette and other travel and tourism-related magazines. Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne has authored and photographed several books on Sri Lankan wildlife.

Sri Lanka is arguably the best all-round wildlife destination with big game safaris, Blue Whale watching, the largest recurring Gathering of Elephants in the world, rich biodiversity in lowland rainforests and cloud forests, all within easy viewing in a week in an island with superb tourism infrastructure. Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne will introduce the island explaining why it is super-rich for wildlife and the key target species. Pippa Jacks will introduce some of the country's top parks for biodiversity and big game, including Sinharaja rainforest and the national parks of Uda Walawe, Minneriya and Yala.



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## Shahina Ghazanfar, Earliest botanical gardens in the Middle East



Since ancient times, plants have travelled with man taken from their original habitats and cultivated at new destinations. Be it for food, timber, medicine, making utilitarian objects, fragrance, shade or just for pleasure, plants have been intimate companions to humankind since millennia. The very first “gardens” were created when humans began to adopt a sedentary mode of life. Some of the earliest gardens in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, besides growing food plants, were pleasure gardens attached to Palaces.



Shahina Ghazanfar is a plant taxonomist specialising in floras of the Middle East. She has a particular interest and expertise in the conservation, biogeography and plants of economic of plants and in the restoration of degraded and damaged lands of the Middle East. She is Honorary Research Associate at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew where she worked for over 15 years. She wrote the Flora of Oman and is currently a contributor and editor of the Flora of Iraq.

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## Robert Prys-Jones, Saga of the Large-billed Reed Warbler



The Large-billed Reed Warbler, an unprepossessing “little brown job”, was described in 1869 from a single specimen taken in north-west India in 1867. For over 130 years it sat in limbo in the collections of the Natural History Museum, with ornithologists unclear if it was a good species, an aberrant specimen of a known species or a hybrid. This talk will outline the serendipitous series of events, based on an interaction of museum investigation with field research, whereby all then suddenly became clear during the first decade of



Following an earlier career studying birds while based in the Seychelles, Australia and South Africa, Robert returned to Britain in the late 1980s to spend the next five years in charge of the Estuaries Unit of the BTO. Appointed Head of Bird Collections at the Natural History Museum (NHM), Tring, he was in post there for nearly twenty-five years before retiring in 2016. He remains a Scientific Associate of the NHM and spends much of his time attempting to write up his backlog of accumulated research.

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## Liz Andrew



Liz's first degree was in Zoology at University College London where she specialised in immunology. After a PhD at the Institute of Cancer Research she worked as a research immunologist publishing a number of refereed papers. She is involved in voluntary conservation work on Hampstead Heath (monitoring the grass snake and the damselfly and dragonfly populations). She is a fellow of the Zoological Society of London, a member of the British Society for Immunology and also of the RSPB, Marylebone Birdwatching Society, LNHS and the Woodland Trust. She is the Papers Editor of the London Bird Report.

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## Maria Longley, London's Changing Wildlife



"May. 1. Saw one Swifts two house-martins in Fleet St." naturalist Gilbert White wrote in his journal in 1785. Humans and wild species continue to coexist in London to this day and there are many people who continue making observations about our shared environment. There are many reasons why people are interested in knowing more about London's changing wildlife patterns and the stories hidden in those changes.

Maria Longley has worked with Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL) for the past ten years. Her projects with GiGL have involved collating, managing and sharing information about London's natural environment and she has enjoyed exploring the wildlife of the capital and the records of encounters between humans and wild species.



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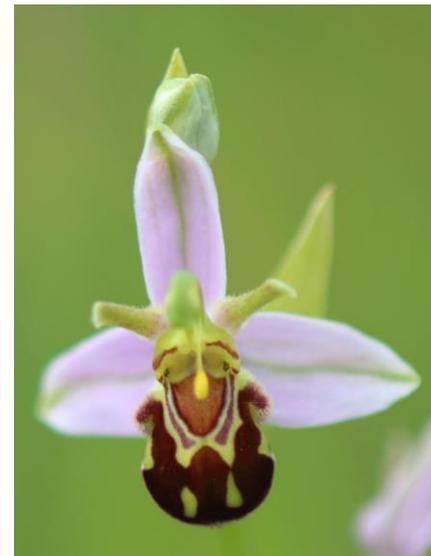
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## Richard Bullock, Wild Orchids in London



The London area has had over 37 wild orchid taxa recorded historically. This talk outlines some of the best locations in London to go looking for wild orchids and also introduces some of the species readily encountered at WWT London Wetland Centre (LWC). At LWC, hundreds of Southern Marsh Orchids are supported by an accompaniment of scores of Bee Orchid and Pyramidal Orchid in its flower-rich meadows, alongside a variety of other orchid species

Richard's conservation projects have included: coastal cliff rare plant surveys on Isle of Wight; surveying endangered Livingstone's Fruit Bat in the Comoro Islands; and ditch surveys, leading to the Puxton Moors SSSI notification on the Avon Levels. Richard has been Biodiversity Officer with WWT in London for 22 years. During site development, he has overseen: wildlife surveys; research students; reserve SSSI notification and production of its five year management plan; and UK / London biodiversity issues relating to the centre



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## Edwin Malins, Butterflies of London



Our changing environment continues to create winners and losers among the butterfly species of London. This talk will focus on some of the species that are increasing in our city, as well as those which are at risk of decline. The talk will also explain what measures are being taken by the LWT to reverse loss of biodiversity and to bring back butterflies to our cities.

Edwin is London Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserves Manager, overseeing 37 nature reserves across the capital. Currently the Trust are working on the Brilliant Butterflies, a partnership project with Butterfly Conservation and the Natural History Museum. This project seeks to restore and create chalk grassland across south Croydon and Bromley, engage local people with the wildlife on their doorstep and explore pioneering environmental DNA (eDNA) surveying techniques.



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Pippa Jacks, Sally Middleton, Keiron Brown & Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne

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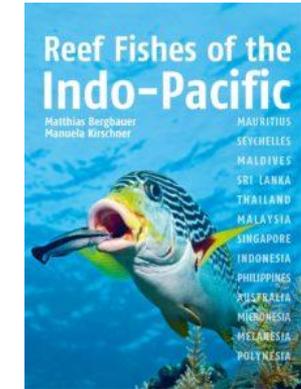
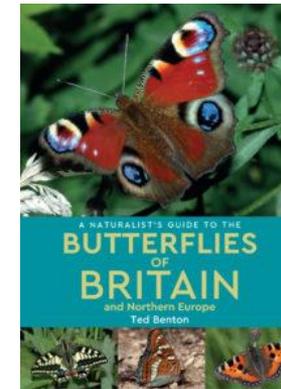
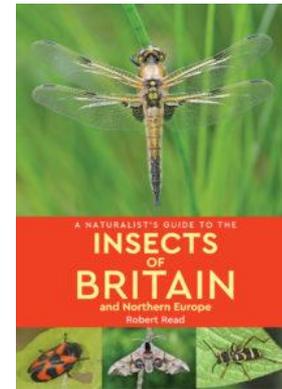
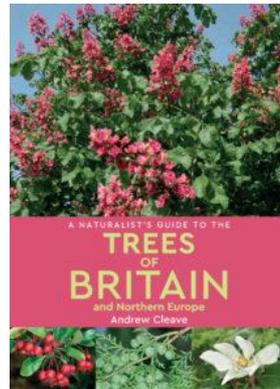
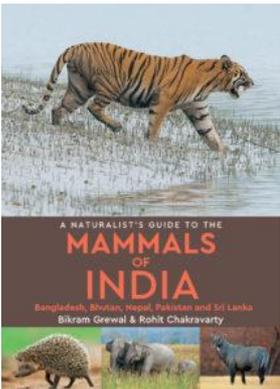
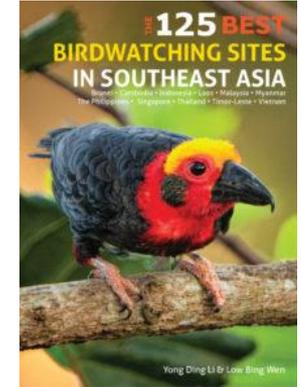
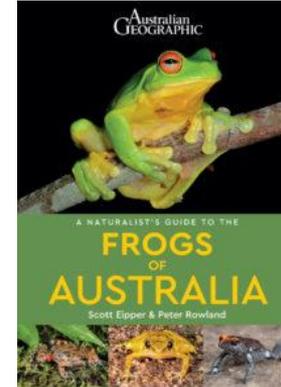
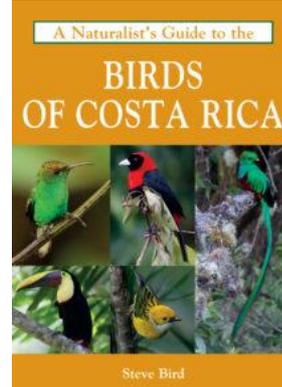
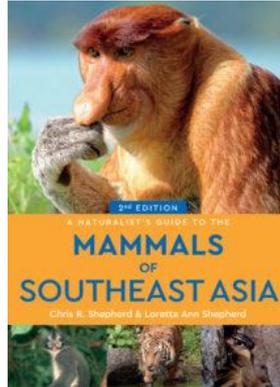
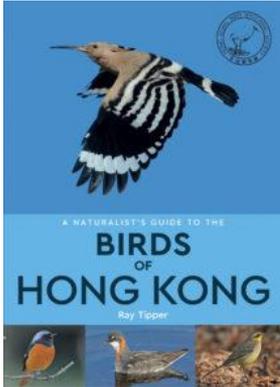
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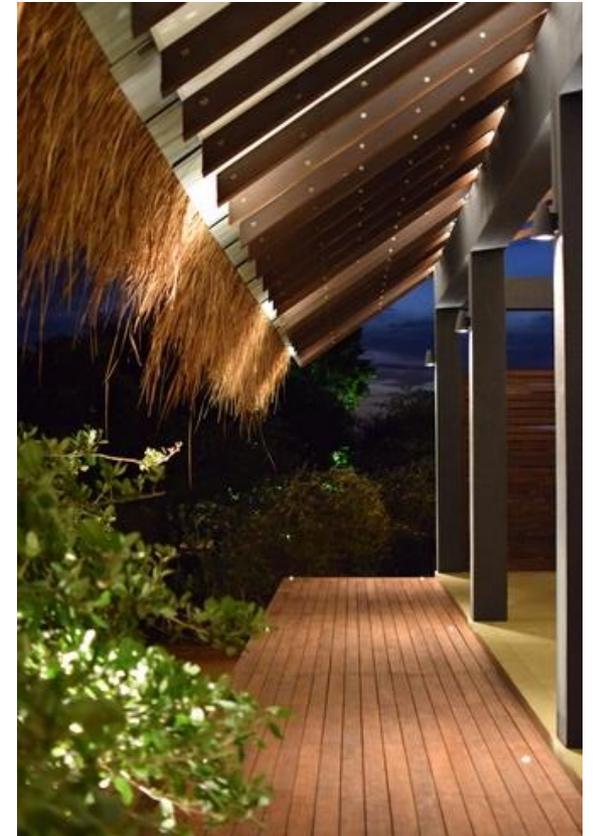
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