



**'Wild about
Thames' events.**

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Our Wild about Thames events help to raise awareness about the ecological importance of our sites and the wildlife that can be found on them. These events help educate our people, as well as our customers, about the importance of our work to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Here are some of the events which took place last year:

Wild about Woodlands.

Our volunteers coppiced woodland at Bracknell sewage treatment works (STW). Coppicing is a historic form of woodland management to yield timber. It’s still an important practice to open up shady woodlands and allow ground flora to thrive, such as the emerging bluebells at Bracknell STW (as in the picture below).

Wild about Orchids.

We ran walk and talk events about orchids at Walton water treatment works (WTW). More than 60 of our sites have orchid populations which we conserve with balanced management plans. This includes protecting certain areas on our sites from footfall and reducing summer mowing regimes.



Wild about Wildflowers.

Our people were involved with stripping turf and sowing wildflower seeds at Woking STW. Wildflowers provide vital forage and habitat for our declining pollinator species, so we allow these flowers plenty of time to grow before cutting them, collecting their seeds, and sowing them during autumn.

Wild about Scrub.

Our people also got involved with cutting back scrub around Winchester reservoir. Scrub includes a wide variety of vegetation types, mostly woody plants, which was threatening to encroach on important wildflower-rich grassland.



Bluebells emerging at Bracknell STW.



Man orchid at Epsom Downs Reservoir.



The historic Woking STW behind sowed wildflower beds, spring 2018.

- 14 Wild about Thames events were held in 2017/18.
- 65 Thames Water staff and over 200 of our customers got involved.
- 12 Thames Water sites benefitted from 337 hours of voluntary work.

Wild about Butterflies.

Many of our sites are home to important habitats which are valuable for butterflies, such as chalk grasslands and wildflower meadows. We held an identification workshop followed by a site survey at Winchester Wood. The site was identified as having high potential, but at risk from encroaching surrounding woodland. Our activities keep the site at its chalk grassland status and maintain the habitat for butterflies and other pollinator species.

Last year, we established a partnership with Butterfly Conservation, which has already seen volunteers undertaking extensive work across three of our sites at Chinnor, Winchester Wood and Wendover Dean. Butterfly Conservation provides biodiversity training for our grounds maintenance teams, carries out surveys and food/plant assessments.

Two of our three sites, where Butterfly Conservation has worked so far, have the potential to support the rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly (*Hamearis lucina*), which is only found in England and whose numbers have declined rapidly in recent decades. We hope in the near future we can play a leading role in boosting this species' numbers.



Marbled white butterfly on a Pyramidal Orchid.



Wild about Birds.

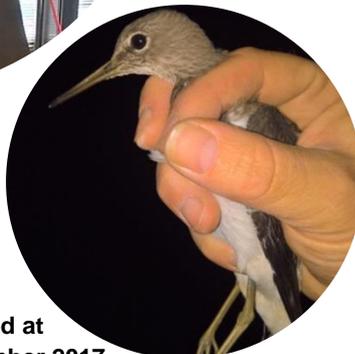
This event was held at Swindon Lagoons, and involved a bird ringing demonstration which gave attendees the rare opportunity to see birds up close and in the hand. Bird-ringing by licenced qualified partners gathers data on health, growth, and breeding success, as well as species abundance and range.

Wild about Owls.

We held this event at our head office in Reading, helping our people to learn about these majestic creatures and other birds of prey at our sites. Many of our people had the opportunity to handle owls and have photos taken with them. We have a number of sites which support nesting barn owls and many other species of top avian predators, from kestrels and sparrowhawks to the fastest animal in the world, the peregrine falcon.



Bringing nature to our people: holding a barn owl.



Green sandpiper caught and ringed at Swindon, September 2017.