

Events at WWT London Wetland Centre 2011 [Regular events are listed at the end]

September

Saturday 10 September - Sunday 16 October 2011

Autumn Family Weekend Activities

Enjoy an autumnal day out at London Wetland Centre. Take a refreshing walk round the reserve at this time of year and see the wetlands transform as the seasons change.

Different birds will arrive on the lakes and pools - look out for the colourful ducks such as shoveler and teal - and you'll see plenty of fruit and berries in the hedgerows.

Family activities

10.30 - 11.00 Storytelling: Harvest Birds

Come and hear a story about how birds can help us with our harvest and make a bird of your own. For children aged 5 and under. Tower.

11.15 - 12.15 Plant dyes and presses

Find out about some of our plants here at London Wetland Centre and make your own plant press, or make your own natural dyes and paint with them. (£1 charge) Pond Zone Canopy.

12.30 - 13.00 Pond dipping

Use a net to find out what animals live inside the pond. Pond zone.

14.00 Foraging Walk

Find out about free foods and some traditional herbal remedies as we take a walk around the wetlands to find out how to forage. Courtyard. NB Please do not pick any plants or berries at the Centre as we need to leave plenty of food on the reserve for wildlife.

15.30 - 16.00 Pond dipping

Use a net to find out what animals live inside the pond. Pond zone.

Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Monday 19 and Monday 26 September 2011

Pond dipping for adults

12 noon and 3pm

Why should children have all the fun messing about in ponds? This is a chance for adult visitors to London Wetland Centre to roll up their sleeves and enjoy a spot of pond dipping.

Come with us on a Pond Safari to hunt for the many different kinds of insects and other small animals that live in fresh waters. You may find anything from a diving beetle to a caddisfly larvae and our team will be on hand to tell you about the creatures' behaviours and habitats.

No previous knowledge is required, the sessions are just for fun; for people who want to know a bit more about the mysterious animals that live at the bottom of a pond.

Meet in the Pond Zone. No need to book – just turn up!

Saturday 24 September 2011

Mark Carwardine - Technical wildlife photography workshop

9.30 – 5.00pm

Run by wildlife photographer and TV zoologist Mark Carwardine, this one-day technical workshop is open to beginners and those wishing to brush up on their technical skills, both in the camera and in the computer. Everyone will benefit from the day and it promises to be inspiring and great fun too! There will be plenty of opportunity for questions and one-to-one assistance and a practical session, too.

There are three main objectives:

- 1) to learn about digital workflow and basic editing, processing and filing techniques
- 2) to improve your understanding of the technical side of your camera and the best settings to use for different circumstances
- 3) to inspire you with lots of thoughts, suggestions and ideas for everything from digital manipulation to joining a picture library and entering a competition

Price - £140 (including lunch and refreshments)

To book a place call 020 8409 4400. Places are limited and will be on a first come first served basis.

Sunday 25 September 2011

Mark Carwardine - Creative wildlife photography workshop

9.30 – 5.00pm

Run by wildlife photographer and TV zoologist Mark Carwardine, this one-day workshop is open to beginners as well as more experienced photographers. Everyone will benefit from the day and it promises to be inspiring and great fun too!

There are three main objectives:

- 1) to help you improve your photographic skills with a combination of lectures and practical sessions
- 2) to inspire you with lots of thoughts, suggestions and ideas
- 3) to answer your questions about anything from how to set up your camera to how to get your pictures published

Price - £140 (including lunch and refreshments)

To book a place call 020 8409 4400. Places are limited and will be on a first come first served basis.

October

Saturday 1 October

Wildlife walk for members

1pm

Our monthly wildlife walks for members are not just a great chance to hear from one of our experts and to spot seasonal wildlife - you'll also meet other WWT members!

In October bitterns return to London Wetland Centre. Numbers of wintering ducks such as shoveler, teal, gadwall and wigeon will begin to rise. Wildlife surprises last October included bearded tits and a migrating merlin!

Please bring binoculars if you have them.

WWT members-only walk. £2. Booking essential: please call 020 8409 4400.

Sunday 9 October

The Urban Birder: talk and book signing

2.30pm

Cities are surprisingly good places to watch wildlife: London, for an example, has a fascinating array of bird species. Londoner David Lindo, the Urban Birder, is dedicated to spreading the word about birdwatching in cities. Join him to hear about his varied experiences as an urban birdwatcher, from encounters with the police to finding oases of wildlife amid the city sprawl.

Follow David's journey from leading tours around his primary school woods at the age of eight to encouraging budding birders on TV and in his wildlife magazine columns.

David will also be sharing some top urban birding tips.

His new book, *The Urban Birder*, will be available to buy in the shop and David will be signing copies after the talk. The talk is free with admission to the Centre.

David has appeared on *Springwatch* and *Countrywise*, and has a regular slot on BBC1's *The One Show*. He also writes for numerous birdwatching and wildlife magazines including *BBC Wildlife* and *Bird Watching*. He is currently a patron of The Disabled Birders Association and Spitalfields City Farm. He's also a fellow of the International League of Conservation Writers and founder of the Tower 42 Bird Study Group.

Find out more about urban birding on David's Urban Birder website <http://www.theurbanbirder.com/>

Sunday 16 October
Autumn Plant walk
1.30pm

Late autumn is a great time to get a close look at the botanical side of London Wetland Centre!

The Centre has been carefully planted with a variety of plant species that provide shelter and food for wildlife. Sloes, hawthorn berries and rosehips, for example, help to feed birds and small mammals throughout the winter.

During the walk, which lasts about an hour, Alwyn Craven, our resident plant expert and Kew graduate will identify plants and explain their importance to our wildlife.

Meet in the courtyard. £6pp - this does not include entrance to the Centre. Limited places: please call 020 8409 4400 to book your place.

Saturday 22 – Sunday 23 October
Bats and spiders weekend

With Halloween coming up it seems an appropriate time to look at some wildlife that many people find scary! Bats and spiders don't deserve their fearsome reputation, and when you meet them close up and learn more about these fascinating animals you'll see a totally different side to them.

Come along to see some rescued bats and hear about their habitats and behaviour. And the Bat Conservation Trust will be at the Centre for the weekend with bat masks and hats, bat facepainting, bat games (such as pin the nose on the bat!) and a display of interesting bat facts.

To counter some of the scarier myths and phobias about spiders, experts Ray and Angela Hale from the British Tarantula Society will be at the Centre with a display of exotic spider species. As well as spiders from around the world, such as tarantulas, they'll also have a selection of spiders found a little closer to home, so this is a great opportunity to learn more about these shy but amazing creatures. For instance, did you know that crab spiders change colour depending on the flower they are sitting on? Learn all about these shy creatures that you rarely get a chance to see. As well as the spider display there will be a spider talk in our Theatre at 12 noon each day so you can hear about some common British species and learn how to identify them.

Throughout the October half term, we also have a range of family activities on offer, including Wolf Tales puppet shows, storytelling, and the Yuk! interactive show.

Saturday 22 – Sunday 30 October
Halloween Half Term Family Fun

Throughout the entire half term break join in our family activities such as story telling, Wolf Tales Halloween puppet shows, nature crafts and pond dipping.

Most of these activities are free with paid admission to the Centre, and there's no need to book.

Half term activities

Saturday 22 - Sunday 30 October

Self-guided trail: Poo, droppings, spraint, scat

10.30 - 11.00 Storytelling

Listen to a story about Anansi the spider and create your own spider. Tower.

11.15 - 12.15 Nature crafts

Examine a real bird pellet and create your own bird pellet complete with fake bones and fur (£1 charge). Pond zone canopy.

12.30 - 13.00 Pond dipping

Nets at the ready to discover the wonderful life that dwells in our ponds. Pond zone.

14.00 - 14.45 Yuk!

An interactive show about the horrid habits of wetland wildlife. AV Theatre.

15.30 - 16.00 Pond dipping

As above. Pond zone.

Wolf Tales puppet shows

Wednesday 26, Thursday 27 and Saturday 29 October

12.30pm - 1pm, 3-3.30pm

A fun and spooky interactive puppet show based on the tales of Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs. AV Theatre.

Sunday 23 October

Wildlife Photography: Intermediate skills

10am - 4pm

Do you already understand how your camera works and the basics of photography, but want to fine-tune your photography of the natural world?

Based both in the classroom and outside you will explore and practice various advanced techniques and subjects such as:

- Lighting and exposure
- Advanced camera settings
- Depth of Field Preview/ Hyperfocal Distance
- Field craft for wildlife photography
- Bird flight photography
- Advanced composition – to ensure your photos show what you want the viewer to see.

Wildlife photography equipment

This course is suitable for users of SLR cameras only. The content will be tailored to the needs of course attendees and with limited numbers there will be plenty of time for 1-2-1 tuition.

Limited places: maximum 10 participants. £49pp: please call 020 8409 4400 to book your place.

About Iain Green

At eight years old Iain wrote his first book 'Attracting wildlife to your compost heap'; sadly it was never published! However, those early jottings were the start of a lifelong passion for wildlife and since 1997 he has worked as a professional wildlife photographer and author of three published books.

Iain has spent ten years studying wild tigers in the Indian jungles, but now is most often found exploring the urban jungles on our doorstep. Iain's wildlife photography courses at London Wetland Centre are extremely popular and places fill up very quickly, so we advise you to book early.

Tuesday 25 October 2011

Children's photography course

9.30am - 1pm

This course is an exciting opportunity for children age 10-15 to learn the basic principles of photography using a fun approach which enables them to understand the art of photography by framing and recording light.

Ross Paxton, the course tutor, will use a large format camera similar to the ones used in the Victorian ages to demonstrate how this process directly relates to the use of the children's own hi-tech digital cameras.

The aim of the course is to give children a basic understanding of photography and no previous experience is necessary.

About Ross

Ross Paxton was born in Whitby, North Yorkshire. He first came under the spell of photography over a decade ago in the Yorkshire dales. Using a

combination of 35mm film and 4x5 inch camera Ross began to develop his own style but it was not until he studied Photography at the London College of the Arts that he really began to develop his skills.

Ross has published work in the UK and abroad. His photography has helped to fund WWT, The Camphill Trust and more recently the British Heart Foundation. He currently works as a freelance photographer covering events for the UK's largest sports and events photography company.

His personal projects range from working with refugees on the Libyan border to cultural issues in and around London.

What to bring on the day

Essentials: Camera, appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear for walking and weather conditions.

Non essentials but highly recommended: Tripod, your camera manual, any other camera equipment you may own.

Cost: £10 per child including accompanying adult. Price does not include admission to the Centre for either child or adult. The course is limited to a maximum of 8 children. Booking essential: please call 020 8409 4400.

Friday 28 October
Halloween Party
4.30pm – 7.15pm

For a really scary treat, come along to our Halloween Party on Friday 28 October.

Join in our "Yuk!" interactive show, come on a bat walk (with spooky encounters along the way), try fire lighting and listen to some spooky stories.

Dress up in Halloween costume - there's a prize for the best costume!

Suitable for children aged 7 and above. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring your own snacks as we'll have a snack break around 5.45pm.

£10 per child including accompanying adult. Price excludes admission to the Centre for non-members prior to 4.15pm.

Booking essential: please call 020 8409 4400.

Sunday 30 October
Introduction to birdwatching

9.30am – 11.30am

This practical introductory course will help you identify different birds and to understand more about them. An expert warden will guide you around the wildlife reserve.

The course will focus on birds currently on site, their plumage, calls and behaviour. You'll get tips on how to watch birds including how to behave, what to listen out for, and the differences between key species.

Bird highlights: London Wetland Centre is a key wintering site for several duck species, including the significant numbers of shoveler and gadwall that earn the site its Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status. Another avian highlight for winter is the bittern: these beautiful and well-camouflaged herons return in October to fish around the edges of the lakes. We would also expect to see other seasonal visitors like fieldfares, redwings, mealy and lesser redpolls and siskins. You can stay up to date with our latest wildlife news on the [wildlife sightings page](#), or on [Twitter](#).

Practical details and how to book: 9.30am -11.00am. The walk lasts for an hour and a half, followed by breakfast in our café. £20. Price includes breakfast. Price does not include admission to the centre. Booking is essential; call 020 8409 4400. Maximum 10 people. Bring your own binoculars/telescope where possible.

November

Every day

Live 'n' Deadly: Deadly Scene Investigation

Can you solve the murder mystery to find out who committed the dastardly crime? There's a broken nest box high in a tree, with some fur around the box, as well as some tracks. Inside the box are some broken eggs. Suspicious characters have been seen nearby...

Your mission is to solve the seven clues to work out who was the culprit.

CBBC's Live 'n' Deadly: DSI involves puzzles, clues and activities – and if you solve the crime correctly you will get a Live 'n' Deadly badge and certificate.

Saturday 5 November

Wildlife walk for members

1pm

Our monthly wildlife walks for members are not just a great chance to hear from one of our experts and to spot seasonal wildlife - you'll also meet other WWT members!

Wintering ducks such as shoveler, wigeon, teal and gadwall should be easy to spot now. Siskins and lesser redpolls will be feeding high up in

the alder trees, and there's a good chance of finding a bittern hunting in the reedbeds! Frozen ponds increase the likelihood of water rail sightings too, as they dash between clumps of vegetation.

Please bring binoculars if you have them.

WWT members-only walk. £2. Booking essential: please call 020 8409 4400.

Sunday 27 November 2011

Felt Making Workshop

10am - 4pm (1hr break)

Learn a new skill - and make some great Christmas gifts. Felt maker Cathy Unwin will lead this special workshop giving you the opportunity to make a range of beautiful felt items, which will be ideal as Christmas gifts or table centrepieces. You'll be making table mats and flowers but will also gain the knowledge and skills to go on to make a variety of decorative felt objects.

Felt making is one of the most ancient textile crafts, involving wool fibres, water and friction. The story goes that a man was walking across a desert in the dim and distant past and as his footwear was rubbing he grabbed a handful of sheep wool or camel hair, depending on what livestock he had with him, to put into his sandals for adding comfort. The constant friction from walking and the warm atmosphere in his shoe together with the sweat all went to turning the wool into a piece of felt!

Cathy grew up in a creative family and says that 'making' is in her DNA. She qualified in felt making to City & Guilds level 3 and has taught in schools; Landmark Arts Trust; various youth and textile groups; and private and IFA* workshops as well as at craft exhibitions. She is a member of the Eastern Region Textile Forum, E17 Designers and has served four years on the committee of the *International Feltmakers Association (she now helps run the London IFA group too). Cathy will be assisted by another IFA member, Anne Willits.

£45pp for tuition. Please bring with you some soap, a hand towel and a piece of bubble wrap approx 2ft square. You may need approx £3 extra on the day to purchase the wool fibres (although some will be provided in the cost of the course).

Booking essential - please call 020 8409 4400.

December

Saturday 3 December

Introduction to birdwatching

9.30am – 11.30am

This practical introductory course will help you identify different birds and to understand more about them. An expert warden will guide you around the wildlife reserve.

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Saturday 4 December

Wildlife walk for members

1pm

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Please bring binoculars if you have them.

WWT members-only walk. £2. Booking essential: please call 020 8409 4400.

Saturday 10 – Sunday 11 December

Winter Wonderland Weekend

10am – 4pm

Start the festive season with a visit to see Santa and his huggable huskies.

Come and meet these friendly dogs; they look gorgeous but they're also working animals, so younger children can experience the excitement of a husky sleigh ride (age eight and under, although some weight restrictions may apply). Or have your photo taken with one of these cuddly dogs as a special seasonal souvenir. The huskies will be here from 10am - 4pm (with a short break) on both days.

Of course Christmas wouldn't be complete without a visit to Santa, so bring the children to meet him in his cosy grotto set among the firs and pine trees. He'll be at London Wetland Centre throughout the weekend (10am - 12.30pm, 1pm - 4pm). Merlin the magician will be on hand to help Santa keep the children entertained.

In our shop there's enough choice for you to fill everyone's Christmas stocking this year, with classic confectionery and plenty of wildlife themed gifts. Tempt your taste buds throughout the weekend with special Christmas tastings of wonderfully old-fashioned sweets and chocolates.

Gifts from London Wetland Centre's shop won't just delight whoever is unwrapping them on Christmas day: when you shop here you're also contributing towards vital conservation work in the UK and around the world.

Once your shopping is complete take a stroll around the scenic walkways set amongst the lakes, meadows and ponds of this 105 acre wildlife oasis. Enjoy the frost glistening on the trees and watch the ducks hunting for their own version of Christmas dinner! You can enjoy your own lunch in our Water's Edge Café or relax over a coffee and mince pie.

Santa and the huskies are very popular so please be aware that there may be queues.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas.

Saturday 17 - Tuesday 20 December

London Wetland Centre Christmas Pantomime

11.30am and 2.30pm

Which Witch is Which?

Join us for a magical Pantomime full of wetland animals and magic spells.

The Wetland animals need your help... There are Wicked Witches about!

Can our Wetland friends, Duck, Vole, Rabbit and the others find them and put a stop to their wicked plans? And can red apples help them?

Some favourite wetland pantomime characters are back: come and help them before the Witches can turn them all into tiny frogs!

Performances

Saturday 17 - Tuesday 20 December
11.30am and 2.30pm each day

Tickets are £6 and do not include entry to the Centre. Non members must pay entrance fee at time of ticket purchase. Suitable for ages 5 and up. Younger children must also have a valid ticket. Please note that no refund or ticket exchanges are available. Booking is essential, call 020 8409 4400 to reserve your seat.

Regular events

Every day

Guided tours: 11 am & 2 pm

Learn how the centre was created and gain an insight into the sort of wildlife that lives at the centre (free on payment of entry to the centre).

Feed the birds: 3pm

Join a warden as he or she feeds the beautiful and endangered birds in World Wetlands.

Every weekend

12 noon

Walk with a warden

Meet some of the species of wildfowl that WWT has helped to save and learn about its ongoing conservation work.

Monday, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

Guide in the hide (in the Peacock Tower): 11.00am – 1pm

Join one of WWT's experienced birdwatchers who will be on hand to point out unusual species and answer any questions you may have.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Pushbabies: 9.30 am – 10.30 am

Fitness for new mums looking to get back into shape in a fun and sociable environment with a qualified instructor (bring your baby in the buggy). £6 per session (£4 for members).

Weekends and school holidays

Children's activities (daily during weekends and school holidays)

Discover the centre's amazing wildlife and learn weird and wonderful facts with the education team's regular pond dips, wildlife walks and trails.

First Saturday of every month**Wildlife walk for members: 1pm**

Come and see what each season has to offer at the reserve with an expert warden. Available to WWT members only. £2. Booking is essential; call 020 8409 4400.

By appointment**Wildlife watching with an expert**

Book a one-to-one wildlife watching experience with one of our experts. You can choose to focus on birds, plants and trees, reptiles and amphibians, small mammals or pond life. These experiences also make ideal gifts for wildlife lovers! Packages tailored to your exact requirements, from one hour to full day sessions. First hour costs £45, second hour £25 and any subsequent hours at £20. Call 020 8409 4400 for details.

Children's birthday parties

For children aged 5 years to 12 years. Please call 020 8409 4400 for information.