



Your local wildlife news

Ipswich Group of Suffolk Wildlife Trust is part of Suffolk Wildlife Trust's county volunteer network. Led by local Trust members, the group organises events, talks and wildlife activities and raises money for the Trust, to help safeguard our wild and beautiful county.

YAFFLES OVER IPSWICH

My late father's favourite bird was the green woodpecker. As a small boy growing up in rural Suffolk these showy birds would have been a common sight in the meadows where he played. His interest was sparked further by choosing that species as the subject of a school project – so much so that we found that little folder of work in his papers when he passed away 70 years later.

It seems fitting that, in my view, the best place in Ipswich to see green woodpeckers is the Millennium cemetery where his ashes are interred.

We tend to think of woodpeckers hanging around at the tops of trees drumming away but you are much more likely to see the green species on the ground. Its beak and tongue are perfectly adapted to feed on ants and ant larvae. If you watch closely, it's incredible to see how, after using their beak to disturb the ant nest, the ants swarm all over the bird's head as it uses its sticky tongue to draw the tiny creatures into its throat. Green woodpeckers will also feed on caterpillars and grubs their tongue can extract from crevices in the bark.

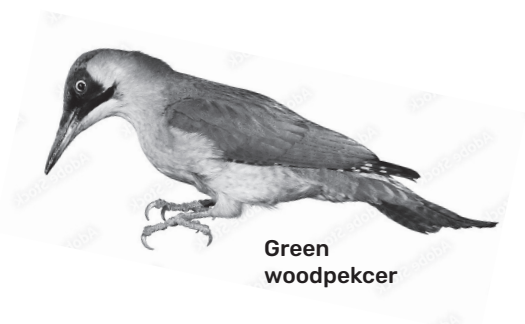
At the cemetery on Tuddenham Road the woodpeckers seem to have got quite used to the comings and goings of people and vehicles. In the summer when, presumably, they have hungry chicks to feed, they will carry on poking around in the sward even if you pass by quite closely – if you are quiet and move slowly.

I'm always amazed that something with such a ridiculously bright red head is so well camouflaged when feeding on the ground. Often green woodpeckers only become visible to me when they fly off – when the distinctive 'bobbing' flight and the loud yaffle call make them easy to spot.

Woodpeckers don't seem to nest in boxes. The male hollows out a hole in a tree – usually preferring one where the wood is slightly rotten. It can take him two weeks to complete a new nest hole – which is understandable as it's up to 16 inches deep. Both parents incubate the eggs and feed the chicks. Newly fledged green woodpeckers are beautiful spotty little things – I've seen them flitting among the trees by the mansion in Christchurch Park.

Like many older Suffolk people, my father also called green woodpeckers **yaffles** – a term that was used to great effect in the 1970s children's TV programme *Bagpuss*, with the wise old woodpecker endearingly known as Professor Yaffle.

Sheila Roberts



Green woodpecker

Be part of Team Wilder

Research shows that if just one person in every four takes up a cause, this can be enough to change the minds and behaviour of the majority. Imagine what we could achieve if that cause was nature: if a quarter of people in Suffolk created more space for wildlife to bring back what we've lost.

**#Team
Wilder**
suffolkwildlifetrust.org



STROLL AND LEARN WITH SUFFOLK WILDLIFE TRUST

There's plenty of evidence to show that our physical and mental health is boosted by two factors – learning new things and taking exercise – and local people can benefit from both by signing up to one or more of a series of events that the Ipswich Group of Suffolk Wildlife Trust has planned this summer.

The season kicks off with two opportunities to join a **birdwatching trip to Orfordness** on 3 May or 10 May.

It continues on the morning of Wednesday 14 June with **A Dawdle down the Deben** for a two-hour birdwatching walk returning to the pub for lunch with guide Melvyn Eke.

On Wednesday 12 July, **Trimley Marshes Nature Reserve** is the venue for a walk with the Reserve Warden and Melvyn, which also takes in Levington Creek Nature Reserve.

For August, we are lining up a visit to a very special wildlife-friendly farm. Look out for this on the Trust's online What's On pages.

Everyone is welcome to come along to these events. We are a friendly group with opportunities to chat socially while walking round and, because the events are led by knowledgeable guides, everyone will return home having seen or learnt about something new whilst benefiting from some physical activity. Prices vary from £5 for a walk to £20 for the Orfordness trip which includes transport around the site.

If you have any questions about the summer events programme, please email:

Mike Grogutt
m.eke@btinternet.com

All walks and trips need to be pre-booked via suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events – just use the filter button and select 'Ipswich Group' to find the full list. Details of the autumn indoor talks starting on 27th September on the subject of coastline changes. Please see details below.

WHAT'S ON

Wednesday 27 September 7.30pm

Talk: EAST ANGLIA'S CHANGING COASTLINE

With Adam Burrows of Natural England. The coast of East Anglia is the most dynamic in the UK. Longshore drift, storms, and now sea level rise due to global warming have all played their part.

Wednesday 25 October 7.30pm

Talk: FARMING AND WILDLIFE

With Sam Hanks, Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Wilder Landscapes Manager.

Farming must change. The overuse of pesticides and fertilizers, destruction of hedgerows and loss of organic matter in the soil are all leading to a degradation of our land, and loss of wildlife and of pollinators, so essential for our crops. What must we do to rectify this situation before it is too late?

All Meetings will be held at 7.30pm at Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF.
£3 includes tea and coffee. Access for those with limited mobility and a hearing loop system. For more details visit:
suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events

Yellowhammer



YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE GROUP CONTACTS

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MAGAZINES

If you would like to help our magazine volunteer delivery team in the future please contact:

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WILD YOUR INBOX

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Your most local reserves

Newbourne Springs ● Levington Lagoon ● Trimley Marshes

Bonny Wood ● Groton Wood ● Hutchisons Meadow

Foxburrow ● Bromeswell Green



Suffolk Wildlife Trust

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