

FEBRUARY 2026 BULLETIN

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WELCOME TO OUR FEBRUARY BULLETIN!

While our ponds and lakes have received a good recharge from rain this past month, the last few sunny days signal spring is approaching! Indeed, our early-year favourite species are already emerging. This time of year is also the season of recording society AGMs, so it's a great time to join your local special-interest wildlife groups and find out what activities and training opportunities are being planned for the new year.

Here at BioBank, we've already started planning for the summer and have been taking on even more volunteers and interns. I look forward to the work we'll do together in the coming months.

Article by Elina-Marielle Doss

Merseyside BioBank has proudly been leading the Liverpool City Region's involvement (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Halton and Wirral) in the City Nature Challenge since 2019, helping to mobilise communities, make thousands of wildlife observations, and raise awareness of our region's rich biodiversity during this 4-day BioBlitz. Whether you're a seasoned recorder, a community organiser, or simply curious about urban nature, we'd love for you to join us and help shape our local response to this global challenge.

LCR CNC Preparation Event 2026

Last year in November, we ran an online tutorial about the City Nature Challenge and iNaturalist. For those who have missed the event, we have now uploaded the recording.

[Recording](#)

iNaturalist LCR CNC Project

As mentioned during the session, we have set up a project on iNaturalist for the Liverpool City Region, which you might like to join to keep up with what's been recorded.

[Project](#)

LCR CNC Preparation Event 2026

If you have any events planned that you would like us to share or if you want to attend any events in the LCR, please check in to our Project Journal on a regular basis.

[Project Journal](#)

LCR CNC Preparation Event 2026

If you have any question regarding the CNC, we have created a page for FAQs. If your question isn't provided in the FAQs, feel free to add your question/s to the page.

[FAQs](#)

We're currently in the process of organising events so there aren't any events published yet. But once we have organised events and receive information about events organised by our partners, we will share them in the Project Journal for each Local Authority Area (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Halton and Wirral).

We look forward to working together to celebrate and document the wildlife in the Liverpool City Region.

Our internship and placement season has officially started. This year, we are excited to host two interns from the University of Chester from their 'Inspiring Future's' programme supporting students identified through the University's Access and Participation plan providing targeted support, resources, and opportunities to help them develop their skills and progress confidently in their career journey.

Fayefunmi Oluwanifemi



Hi, my name is Fayefunmi Oluwanifemi, and I'm really happy to be joining Mersey BioBank for my placement. I'm currently studying for a Master's degree in Conservation Management, and I have a strong interest in using QGIS for Phase 1 habitat mapping and wider conservation work. I applied for this placement because I wanted practical experience that goes beyond lectures and assignments and allows me to see how research is applied in real-world settings. When I came across Mersey BioBank and the work it does, it felt like a great fit with my interests in data, mapping, and environmental research.

While at Mersey BioBank, I'm particularly looking forward to developing my skills through hands-on project work. This includes building confidence in QGIS, contributing to Phase 1 habitat map production, and gaining experience with field-based activities, such as brown hare surveys.

Being involved in both desk-based and fieldwork is something I'm especially excited about, as it brings together theory, data, and on-the-ground conservation. Overall, I'm very grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Mersey BioBank team. I'm looking forward to learning from others, gaining practical experience, and contributing meaningfully to projects that support research and conservation efforts.

Sophie Checkland



Hi! I'm Sophie - mum of two and aspiring scientist.

I'm currently finishing my final year as an undergraduate Wildlife Conservation student, deep in the midst of dissertation work. This marks my sixth year of education focused on ecology, conservation and animal management, and I'm very much ready for my cap and gown. I'm hoping to continue my studies with a research Master's building on my self-designed and independently led dissertation to develop robust baseline data that can support future low-cost conservation efforts.

I love working outdoors in all weathers and I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty. I'm incredibly grateful to Merseyside Biobank as an intern, and I know the experience and knowledge I'll gain here will be invaluable to my future career in conservation.

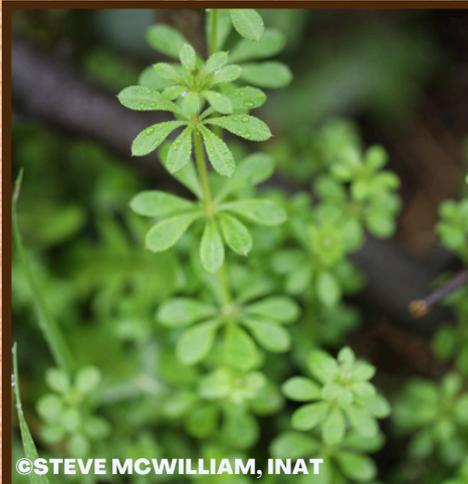
1.3 BIOBANK BOUNTY

EVEN WHILE DODGING BETWEEN THE RAINDROPS AND ICY PUDDLES, THE BIOBANK TEAM HAS SPOTTED A RANGE LIFE HERE AT COUT HEY PARK. THIS MONTHS HIHGLIGHT INCLUDE:



©ELEANOR REECE, INAT

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER
DENDROCOPOS MAJOR



©STEVE MCWILLIAM, INAT

CLEAVERS
GALIUM APARINE



©JACQUELINEW71, INAT

BUFF-TAILED BUMBLE BEE
BOMBUS TERRESTRIS



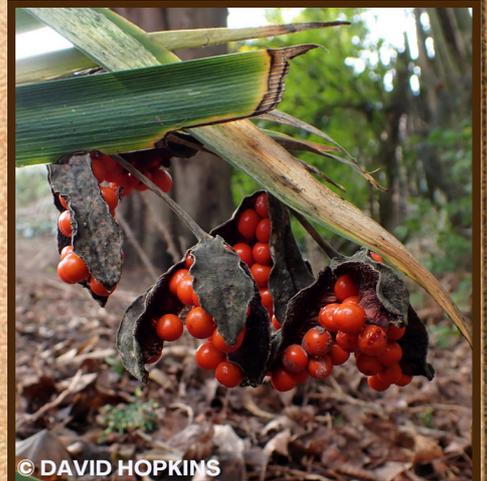
©SUSAN MARLEY, INAT

PRIMROSE
PRIMULA VULGARIS



©SUSAN MARLEY, INAT

WILD GARLIC / RAMSONS
ALLIUM URSINUM



© DAVID HOPKINS

ROAST-BEEF PLANT
IRIS FOETIDISSIMA

AS ALWAYS, IF YOU DO SPOT ANY OF THESE SPECIES PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU SUBMIT YOUR RECORDS TO US HERE AT MERSEYSIDE BIOBANK, SO WE CAN INCLUDE THEM IN OUR DATABASE!

Article by David Hopkins

Colts Foot (*Tussilago farfara*)

This hardy little plant is an expert at flourishing in extreme conditions, even able to poke through banks of snow. Because of this its easy to spot in the bare patches of ground, where it makes the most of the early season's low level of competition.

Identification Tips: Large, yellow flower heads with prominent, round middles give the identity of this plant away. Its flowers are borne on scaly stems. It's rounded or heart-shaped leaves emerge later in the year.

Habitat: Widespread, likes open, disturbed areas.



© ROY LOWRY, INAT

Common brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamn*)

For me, spotting the first splashes of colour in spring is the greatest joy, and nothing catches the eye more than the sulphur-yellow of brimstone butterflies. This sulfurous splash, darting about at head height, is hard to miss against the leafless scrub at this time of year!

Identification Tips: Unmistakable large yellow-green colour, with pale-edged and pointed windtips.

Habitat: Its larval food plants are common and alder buckthorn, so it is commonly seen in scrubby grassland and woodland edges.



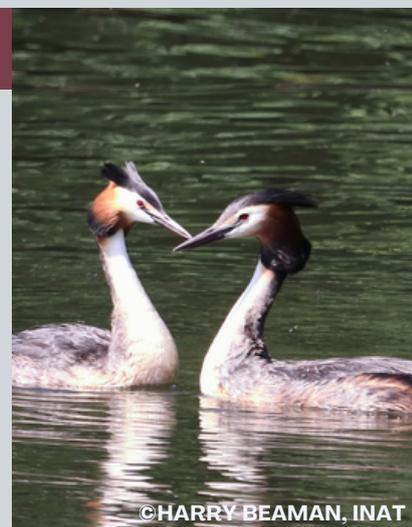
© SUSAN MARLEY, INAT

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Early spring is a great time to watch bird behaviours as mates need to be courted and territories re-established. The most remarkable of these is the mating dance of the great crested grebe that starts about now. In this, couples gather a piece of water weed in their beaks and flick and bob their heads elaborately before paddling so hard they lift full out of the water.

Identification Tips: Large waterbird, with a long pointed beak, and a distinctive black and reddish-brown head crest.

Habitat: Found on open water bodies and slow-flowing rivers with abundant vegetation to nest in. To see the dance, early mornings are best.



© HARRY BEAMAN, INAT

Dark-edged Bee Fly (*Bombylius major*)

While bees often steal the insect limelight, it's hard to deny the charm of this fluffy fly. This species is an obvious spot for the first warm days. It is not only a mimic of bees but actually a parasite of them and you can often see it doing a little dance as it flicks its eggs into the nest holes of solitary bees and wasps.

Identification Tips: yellowy-brown hair on its body, long, spindly legs, and a long proboscis. Wings have dark markings along their leading edges (unlike other bee flies of the same genus).

Habitat: Will be present in most early pollination sources, commonly can be seen on the edge of sandy paths or open areas where bees nest.



© ROY LOWRY, INAT

Article by Paul Round



Observations: 908

Species: 409

This month's records from iNaturalist across Merseyside included a total of 908 records of 409 species, and has seen a decrease on both records and species from January totalling 1,336 records of 427 species. This month's observations has plants leading the way again with the earlier flowering Common Snowdrop recorded the most. Records of birds and fungi were in decent numbers again and we have slowly started seeing more insect records with the warmer temperatures at the end of February, with Buff-tailed Bumble Bee *Bombus terrestris*, Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*, and 7-Spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata* recorded the most.

Thanks again for all that have helped record wildlife across the region and uploaded your records to iNaturalist. Take a look below at the most recorded species of each taxa across Merseyside.

Very low numbers of plant species records this month with the early flowering Common Snowdrop being our most recorded plant species across the region, with some great displays on show here in Court Hey Park.

Avian records were sparse too with the Mallard taking top spot, but regular sightings of Pink-footed Goose remain too before they set off to their summer breeding grounds in Arctic tundra regions of Iceland, East Greenland, and Svalbard.

1 **PLANTS**



Common Snowdrop
Galanthus nivalis



12
Records

- 2 **Rough-stalked Feather-Moss**
Brachythecium rutabulum 11
- 3 **Spring Crocus**
Crocus neapolitanus 9
- 4 **Common Nettle**
Urtica dioica 8
- 5 **Common Daisy**
Bellis perennis 8

1 **BIRDS**



Mallard
Anas platyrhynchos



12
Records

- 2 **Carrion Crow**
Corvus corone 10
- 3 **Great Cormorant**
Phalacrocorax carbo 8
- 4 **Pink-footed Goose**
Anser brachyrhynchus 8
- 5 **Pied Wagtail**
Motacilla alba 7

Article by Paul Round

The milder temperatures towards the end of February have seen insect records on the increase with Buff-tailed Bumble Bee, Harlequin Ladybird and 7-Spot Ladybird the most recorded species.

Other vertebrate records for the month were low in numbers with the introduced Pond Slider taking top spot with 3 records. It was good to see the native Great Crested Newt and Common Porpoise make the top five this month.

1

INSECTS



Buff-tailed Bumblebee
Bombus terrestris

4
Records

- 2 **Harlequin Ladybird**
Harmonia axyridis 4
- 3 **7-Spot Ladybird**
Coccinella septempunctata 4
- 4 **Fox Moth (caterpillar)**
Macrothylacia rubi 3
- 5 **Marmalade Hover Fly**
Episyrphus balteatus 2

1

OTHER VERTEBRATE



Pond Slider
Trachemys scripta

3
Records

- 2 **European Rabbit**
Oryctolagus cuniculus 3
- 3 **Eastern Grey Squirrel**
Sciurus carolinensis 2
- 4 **Great Crested Newt**
Triturus cristatus 1
- 5 **Common Porpoise**
Phocoena Phocoena 1

Other invertebrate records belonged mainly to arachnids this month. Not many records in total were recorded with Amaurobius Fenestralis Group Complex the most recorded with just two records.

Fungi and lichen records had a few records with Golden Shield Lichen taking top spot with 10 records, closely followed by Jelly-ear fungus by one record.

1

OTHER INVERTEBRATE



Amaurobius Fenestralis Group Complex
Amaurobius Fenestralis

2
Records

- 2 **Ground Crab Spiders**
Genus Xysticus 1
- 3 **Genus Dysdera** 1
- 4 **Rabbit Hutch Spider**
Steatoda bipunctata 1
- 5 **Rusty False-keeled Slug**
Arion fasciatus 1

1

FUNGI & LICHENS



Golden Shield Lichen
Xanthoria parietina

10
Records

- 2 **Jelly Ear**
Auricularia auricula-judae 9
- 3 **Hairy Curtain Crust**
Stereum hirsutum 8
- 4 **Elf Cups**
Genus Sarcoscypha 6
- 5 **Turkey-Tail**
Trametes versicolor 6

Article by Dr. Phil Smith

January was a very wet month for many but not for us! A succession of Atlantic systems, including three named storms, brought heavy rain to eastern, southern and southwest England, northeast Scotland and Northern Ireland. Some counties had their wettest January on record. However, Met Office maps show that, surprisingly, our region received average or below average rainfall. This is confirmed by Rachael Park's garden data. She recorded measurable rain on 26 days but a monthly total of only 65 mm which is about 25% lower than average for Formby. Otherwise, the UK had slightly lower temperatures than the January normal and about average sunshine. The water-table at the Devil's Hole, Ravenmeols, rose by a modest 8 mm during the month, resulting in extensive flooding of the deeper slack areas.



Annual Mercury *Mercurialis annua*
Kirklake Road Formby 25.01.26



Herring Gull feeding time
Southport Marine Lake 1.26



Stinking Hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*
Kirklake Road 25.01.26

[To continue reading, please follow this link](#)

1.7 Website Update

We're updating our website* and have added a new **Resources** page to include new information on **Local Groups** in North Merseyside and the local area.

This page includes volunteering opportunities, committee meetings, outdoor events and surveys from groups such as Liverpool Botanical Society, North West Mammal Recording Network, Tanyptera Trust, National Trust, RSPB and more.

*Links are updated regularly but if you find any that are not working, please let us know.

[To find out more, please follow this link](#)

Article by Paul Round

Local Finds



This month saw an unusual sighting of a Great-tailed Grackle (1) at Speke Hall in Liverpool.

This individual has stuck around for a few weeks now, and is a species that's distribution range covers Mexico and Central America and now extends into the southern and west of the US. A Brimstone Butterfly (2) was recorded on the Sefton Coast and whilst a common species, adults don't usually come out of hibernation until March, so this is a particularly early record. The Swan Goose (3) is an unusual record, but it must be noted that this is more than likely a domesticated specimen or an escapee.

Regional Finds



The long staying Shorelark (1) continues to show well at Mow Cop in Cheshire, present on a muddy field which is slightly unusual habitat for this species which is usually found on marine and intertidal habitats. Other records for the region included American Wigeon (2), Eurasian Otter (3), Taiga Bean Goose (4) and Slavonian Grebe (5).

3.1 Twilight Sessions

Article by Liv Lightfoot



09

Our Twilight Sessions are back for 2026!

We are again looking forward to providing new sessions in 2026, with more talks lead by our team and outside experts. We will continue to cater to nature enthusiasts, whether you are a beginner or seasoned recorder, please join us to learn something new.

Why attend?

- Connect with Nature
- Gain new skills and knowledge
- Contribute to conservation
- Join a community of like-minded people

How can you join?

Spaces for these workshops are limited, so be sure to register early to secure your spot! All sessions are expected to run between 18:30-20:30 on the first Tuesday evening of the month. There is no twilight session in January.

2026 Programme*:

FEB
3 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Owl Pellets

MAR
3 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Bees

APR
7 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Seabirds or Waders

MAY
5 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Common caterpillars and foodplants

JUN
2 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Longhorn beetles

JUL
7 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Ferns

AUG
4 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Hoverflies

SEP
1 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Spiders

OCT
6 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Fungi/Waxcap Grasslands Project

NOV
3 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Winter species

**Book
your
tickets**

*times and dates subject to change. Keep an eye on our social media for up to date information.

Tickets are available on [Eventbrite](#), and will be advertised through our monthly bulletin and on social media.

Sign up to our monthly bulletin [here](#)

Lancashire Wildlife Recorders' Conference

£5

Lancashire Wildlife Recorders' Conference

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday 7th March 2026 - 10am to 5pm - Blackburn College

Join us for a full day celebrating wildlife recording in Lancashire. Hear from local experts and recording groups, discover the latest conservation news, and enjoy a variety of talks, workshops, and displays covering birds, plants, mammals, insects, and more.

Full programme and booking details will follow soon.

If you'd like to offer a short talk relevant to wildlife recording in Lancashire, please get in touch.

Contact: Steve Garland - Lancashire Wildlife Recorders' Forum Chair
Email: steve@stevegarland.co.uk



Generously supported by Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society

[Book your tickets here](#)

Liverpool Biological Society

The Liverpool Botanical Society, our local BSBI group, have released their indoor meetings for 2026. To attend any indoor meetings or field visits, you need to be a member. Membership is **£5 per year**. These meetings are a great opportunity to improve your botanical skills, learn about new species and projects and to have a great time with like-minded people.

Upcoming Indoor Meetings

Plant Records & their uses in Botanical Gardens

Saturday 21st March | 11am

Location: Liverpool World Museum, L3 8EN

Meet on the ground floor and you will be taken up at 10:55am.



Liverpool Botanical Society

[More information here](#)

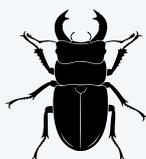
Ento Live

In March and April, Ento Live have the below events available. All of them are free to attend online for people with a passion and interest for invertebrates. Well worth checking them out and tuning in for the ones that are of an interest to you. To book on to any sessions, please click on the links below.



5th March 2026 | 13:00 - 14:00

[Antarctic Invertebrates: Diversity and Threats](#)



Thursday 12th March 2026 | 13:00 - 14:00

[Changes in UK Stag Beetle Population](#)



Tuesday 7th April 2026 | 13:00 - 14:00

[Revealing Insect Pest Pathways](#)

[More events here](#)



Tanyptera Trust

Lots of interesting events, workshops, webinars and recording days are coming up in February and March with the Tanyptera Trust. See the dates below and follow the links for more information and how to book:



Saturday 14th March | 13:30 pm - 16:00 pm

[Lancashire & Cheshire Entomological Society Spring Meeting 2026](#)

Location: World Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN

Cost: Free



Friday 27th March | 10:30 am - 4:00 pm

[Spider Identification Training: From Field to Microscope](#)

Location: World Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN

Cost: £30.00*

*this session is part of a series, more information is available on the link above.



[More events here](#)

3.3 Upcoming Events

12

Kindling Farm

Kindling Farm have the following events available. More information is available via the links below.

Saturday 14th March 2026 | 11:00-13:30

[Shifting Seasons: Writing in Nature](#)

Wednesday 18th March 2026 | 19:00-20:30

[Reading the Wild: In conversation with Vicki Herd](#)

Saturday 28th March 2026 | 19:30-21:30

[Stargazing at Earth Hour](#)

Kindling Farm also host various volunteering days, check out the link below for more information

Booking for all events is essential, please follow the link below to book.



[More events here](#)

British Botany

British Botany provide a series of online courses, which you might be interested in if you want to expand your knowledge on plants. We have highlighted a few below for you to have a browse:

[Reading the Landscape: An Introduction to Wetland & Fen Identification](#)

Cost: £9.99

[An Introduction to Botanical Survey: NVC](#)

Cost: £12.99

[Plants in the Planning Process](#)

Cost: £7.00



[More courses here](#)

Article by Liv Lightfoot

March

**WILDLIFE
ALLIANCE**

World Wildlife Day - 3rd March

On March 3rd, the world celebrates World Wildlife Day, a global event to raise awareness about wildlife conservation and the urgent need to protect endangered species. As human activities threaten biodiversity, this day is a powerful reminder of our responsibility to safeguard the planet's rich ecosystems.

[More info here](#)

Global Recycling Day - 18th March

Recycling is a brilliant way to help our planet fight climate change. It's a key part of the circular economy, helping to protect the earth's dwindling natural resources. That's what Global Recycling Day is all about – a day for the world to come together and put the planet first.



[More info here](#)

**INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF FORESTS**

International Day of Forests - 21st March

Join us in celebrating the International Day of Forests that takes place annually on 21 March, raising awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

Forests and areas of woodland have a very important part in supporting both our environment and the lives of people who depend on them. Trees help to provide clean air and essentially act as the 'lungs' of the Earth absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen.

[More info here](#)

World Water Day - 22nd March

The global water crisis affects everyone – but not equally. Where people lack the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, inequalities flourish, with women and girls bearing the brunt. It's time to centre women and girls in water solutions.



[More info here](#)



Earth Hour - 28th March 8:30pm-9:30pm

Every March, millions of people around the world come together for one hour to show they care about the future of our planet. From iconic landmarks like Big Ben and the Sydney Opera House to cities across the globe, the lights go out in a stunning display of solidarity for our natural world.

[More info here](#)

Who we are

Merseyside BioBank is the Local Environmental Records Centre for North Merseyside. We collect, manage and share vital information about the wildlife and habitats in our area.

By bringing together records from volunteers, community groups, researchers and professionals, we provide a trusted evidence base that supports conservation, planning and environmental decision-making.

We also help strengthen local recording through training, volunteer opportunities and projects that encourage people to get involved in understanding and protecting North Merseyside's natural environment.

Interested in volunteering with us?

See the next page on our volunteering process & how you can get involved with us

Want to keep in touch?

Follow us on social media, and sign up to receive our monthly bulletin



[Merseyside BioBank](#)



[mbblerc](#)



[Merseyside BioBank](#)



[Merseyside BioBank LERC](#)



[mbblerc.bsky.social](#)

[Sign up to our monthly bulletin here](#)

Want us to advertise for you?

We would like to support any local wildlife, conservation, recording, species-specific groups or Friends of Groups.

We hope to continue to develop our local biodiversity network by:

- Advertising your up-coming events
- Help recruit new members and volunteers
- Provide support on wildlife ID and recording
- Opportunities to work together on projects, and
- Provide connections between local biodiversity groups

Please get in touch: info@merseysidebiobank.org.uk



Express interest

Get in touch by:

- Following links in our social media & monthly bulletin
- Applying via our online platform
- Contacting us directly at info@merseysidebiobank.org.uk

Attend an induction session

Held monthly, allows you to:

- Meet MBB staff
- Learn about what we do and why it is important
- Discuss your opportunities

Sign up to our volunteer portal

The portal allows you to:

- Book volunteer shifts
- Log hours worked on projects

Start volunteering

Office

- Collate records
- Digitise maps
- Write articles

Field

- Outreach events
- Surveying
- Collect data

Personal Projects: Have your own personal interests supported

To see our volunteer opportunities, or to register for the volunteer platform, please scan the QR code or click [here](#)

