



## HAPPY NEW YEAR

As we say goodbye to 2023 and welcome in the New Year (and our new members), there is much to report on.

- The developments with regard to the application for planning permission at Broadwater Lake.
- The Butterfly and Wildflower Surveys
- The successful recruitment drives
- An update on some of the potential new projects being considered by the committee



A highlight of 2023 has been the increased sightings of Water Voles

To date, the sightings have just been on the River Colne but we hope to see the water voles in the Lake itself in 2024

Photographs  
© Michael Talbot



## SAVE BROADWATER LAKE



© Tim Hill

We are joining forces with local people and other local wildlife charities such as Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) to oppose an application submitted recently by Hillingdon Outdoor Activities Centre (HOAC) to develop a new Water Sports Centre on Broadwater Lake.

Broadwater Lake is one of England's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has been a hugely important refuge for wildfowl and other wildlife for the last 40 years.

FoSL believes that, if the development goes ahead, it will cause irreversible damage to the vital habitats and the wildlife of not only Broadwater Lake but also the other lakes in the valley, including Stocker's Lake. This is because the birds migrate between the lakes, particularly when there is disturbance or food shortages. FoSL is also concerned that, if approved, the development is highly likely to set a dangerous precedent that would weaken wildlife protection at other sites in the UK. Currently only 7% of land in England has protected status and much of that is under threat of some form or other.

The HOAC plan will shift the starting location for existing sailing and all new water-based activities (kayaking, canoeing, rowing, paddle-boarding, raft-building, windsurfing) from the north of the lake to the south, which will mean there will be unprecedented levels of disturbance closer to the critical refuge area in the south. HOAC claim that their plan includes new refuge areas for birds but FoSL believe these are insufficient and that HOAC are underplaying how significant the disturbance will be.

Recognising the value of an educational Water Sports Centre, FoSL does not oppose developments at other non-SSSI sites in the area.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Together with Middlesex and Herts Wildlife Trust, Natural England, RSPB, London Wildlife Trust and over 1000 individuals and organisations, we have objected to Hillingdon Council's planning application to build a new Watersports Facility and Activity Centre on Broadwater Lake.

The deadline for comments on this planning application was 21 December 2023 but we have been advised that the Planning Officer will accept any comments received up to Friday 12th January 2024. So please register your objection. <https://planning.hillingdon.gov.uk/OcellaWeb/planningDetails?reference=2382/APP/2023/2906&from=planningSearch>



# Friends of STOCKER'S LAKE



## WILDFLOWER SURVEY

And why there are cattle in the meadows



The reason we have cattle on the reserve during the summer is to stimulate long term wildflower growth. To measure the initiative's effectiveness, once a month between April and September our team of Wildflower volunteers survey Meadows 2 & 3

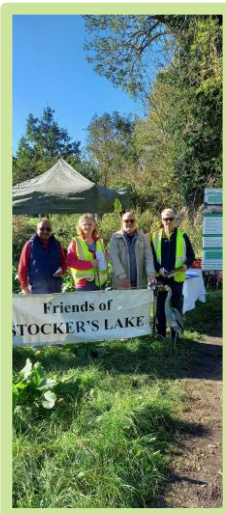
2023 was Year 2 and we are slowly building up a history. It will however take a good few years before any significant changes are seen, though this year there has been slightly more bare earth showing, which should allow flower seeds to spread/settle and start to grow.

Currently we only have enough volunteers to survey Meadows 2 and 3, so we are on the lookout for people with some knowledge of wildflowers and who are interested in becoming part of this project. Volunteers meet on the last Wednesday of the month at 10am and are usually finished by 12-12.30.

If you're interested, please contact Linda Ascroft, Events Organiser at [Lindajascroft@gmail.com](mailto:Lindajascroft@gmail.com)

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

In late October, after a spell of stormy weather, clear blue skies greeted our first recruitment day. Our stand attracted lots of interest and we signed up 24 new members. We thought that was a good result, but we topped it with 26 new members on our second recruitment day in mid-November. So welcome to all 50 new members and thanks to all those FoSL volunteers who helped on those two days.



## FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

### Walks

Wildfowl Walk - 14 Jan 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Wildfowl Walk - 17 Feb 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Heron And Egret Watch - 24 Mar 1:00 pm - 4:00pm

Spring Chorus & Warbler Walk - 12 May 2024 8:30 am - 11:00 am

Wildflower Walk - Jun 2024  
23 Jun 2024 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Butterfly & Dragonfly Walk - 14 Jul 2024 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

### Work parties & AGM

Work Party - 4 Feb 2024 9:55 am - 12:30 pm  
Check location with [warden@fosl.org.uk](mailto:warden@fosl.org.uk)

Work Party - 3 Mar 2024 9:55 am - 12:30 pm

Work Party - 7 Apr 9:55 am - 12:30 pm

2024 Annual General Meeting  
17 Apr 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Work Party - 5 May 2024 9:55 am - 12:30 pm

Work Party - 2 Jun 2024 9:55 am - 12:30 pm

Work Party - 7 Jul 2024 9:55 am - 12:30 pm

## BUTTERFLY SURVEY

A good year for Holly Blues but not Common Blues.

After the very hot, dry summer of 2022, 2023 was much less extreme with slightly above average temperatures and rainfall. These milder conditions were more favourable for butterfly development. Mirroring the national picture, we saw a modest increase in numbers compared to 2022, though it was still slightly fewer than the average measured since 2012. The figure for 2023 was 586 compared to the average between 2012 - 23 of 644. The most-seen species this year were the Red Admiral, Gatekeeper and Large and Small Whites. Holly Blues had another good summer but there were declines in Ringlets, Common Blues and Speckled Woods.



## LOOKING AHEAD

Over the years FoSL have successfully taken on projects above and beyond what we would expect to do on an ongoing basis.

These have included the introduction of cattle to promote wildflower growth, the addition of more Tern islands and, most recently, the Offshore Camera Project.

The committee feel it's time to start planning another BIG new initiative and a range of options are being explored, scoped and discussed. They include bees, bats and bugs, meeting places and scrapes.

If you have any strong views or ideas, do please send them to the FoSL secretary at [cathymalibu@hotmail.com](mailto:cathymalibu@hotmail.com)



2024



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