



Eco-tips March 2025 *Looking after Wildlife*

Who doesn't love a panda, an elephant, a penguin or a lion? And what about the bugs, snails, spiders, wasps and worms? Are they less important in their ecosystems? The answer is a decisive "No"!

Here are a few ecological functions of native animals, including the ones above: They are recyclers of organic matter (slugs & snails, some beetles, earth worms etc.), pollinators (wasps, beetles, hoverflies – not only bees!), predators, keeping populations in balance (wasps, hedgehogs, hoverflies, spiders, centipedes, bats etc.), tunnel builders in soil, improving drainage and soil structure (earth worms, moles, voles etc.), spreaders or planters of seeds (birds, squirrels, badgers etc) and even builders of dams creating new habitat (beavers). All of them have important roles and should be respected as God's creation.

Our way of life puts an increasing number of species under pressure by reducing and fragmenting their habitat, creating deadly hazards (like road traffic) or polluting air, water and soil with various chemicals and waste. The three categories of English wildlife that are most affected are: 1. Butterflies, 2. Birds, 3. Amphibians & Reptiles (according to the Red List Index for England by broad taxonomic group, published by DEFRA).

What could you do?

- Find out about threatened species and habitats – www.surreywildlifetrust.org
- Participate in citizen science projects, monitoring wildlife – Butterfly Conservation Trust; Surrey Amphibian & Reptile Group; Bird Surveying with BTO
- Create habitats on your property (if you have one) – heaps of sticks & leaves over winter; logs of decaying wood; mini ponds; mixed hedges with blossom, berries and nuts; leave long grass with wildflowers.
- Join campaigns for protection, creation and connection of habitats: wetlands; wildlife crossings; wildflower meadows; hedgerows etc.
- Avoid using potentially harmful chemicals in your garden

In May there will be an organised bat watch with a short presentation on one or two evenings in St Mary's church yard – join us watching the Serotine Bats leaving their shelter through the roof tiles at dusk! For more information check our Eco-Church web page in April.

P.S. The Eco-Team at St. Mary's would love to know how many church members actually read the Eco-Tips and how useful they are. If you read them, please drop us a note with a comment and any suggestions you may have: stmarysecoteam@gmail.com Have you been able to act upon any of the previous articles?