Taw Torridge Estuary Forum meeting 19.10.26 Devon Wildlife Trust activities : A brief summary of some contacts/updates in the North Devon Rivers and Estuaries areas

Local Reserves Nature Reserves | Devon Wildlife Trust Contact is Matt Boydell DWT Land Manager
Horsey
Swanpool Marsh Some management work has taken place over the winter months
Marine/Coastal :
South Coast Marine Recovery Project. Devon Wildlife Trust has done a bid for:"an ambitious new community-led initiative that Devon Wildlife Trust is helping to shape alongside the Wildlife Trusts in Cornwall, Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, and Sussex. For more information please see South Coast Marine Recovery Project | The Wildlife Trusts
Coastwise North Devon has done intertidal surveys for the **Wildlife Trust Shoresearch project** at Westward Ho! Combesgate Woolacombe and Hele Bay.Surveys have also been done at Cheyne Beach.The winter storms have moved quite a bit of sand and pebbles around. Invasives surveys have been replaced by the Timed Species Shoresearch survey which also looks at invasives and new arrivals /departures from the shore. Surveys have been completed at Lee Bay, Ilfracombe and Westward Ho!. Dates are advertised on the DWT Website Events section. Events | Devon Wildlife Trust
The Marine Strandings Network has a number of volunteers recording along the coasts. "**Do you know what to do if you see a marine stranding?**
Is the animal alive? Please call **British Divers Marine Life Rescue** immediately on 01825 765546 (office hours) or 07787 433412 (out of hours). Keep your distance, and keep other people and dogs away.
If the animal is dead, please call **Devon Marine Strandings Network** on 07719 086531 or
email strandings@devonwildlifetrust.org. Please include photos, a location and when you found it.
Save the numbers in your phone and spread the word by downloading our leaflet. "
Dead birds can be reported to the Devon Marine Strandings Network. If still alive the advice is to phone the RSPCA West Hatch Wildlife Centre 0300 1230721 and not to touch dead or living birds due to the risk of avian influenza. Sightings of possible avian influenza cases should also be reported to DEFRA 03459 335577.
For more details the Marine Engagement and Awareness Officer is Coral Smith

Planning Applications. The DWT Planning team are still sending in objections and responses to some local applications . Please see the following link for more information about responding to planning applications Wildlife, planning and development | Devon Wildlife Trust
planning@devonwildlifetrust.org
Recently they objected to the bat survey proposed for along the cable route for White Cross wind farm across Braunton Marsh to Yelland sub station area as the plans for the survey were not up to the required standard for such surveys. Others have objected too
They have also been made aware of the Devon Data Campus/BESS project Great Torrington.

Barnstaple and District Local Group :
Have a series of monthly talks at Fremington Parish Hall from September 2026. A summer programme of walks have also been run locally over the summer months Please see the DWT Website events section for more information
Events | Devon Wildlife Trust

Land advice to landowners: Advice is continuing to be available to landowners and farmers in the area through the **Working Wetlands Project, Northern Devon Natural Solutions and Saving Devon's Treescapes**. To find out more:
www.devonwildlifetrust.org/working-landowners-and-farmers

Working Wetlands & Upstream Thinking | Devon Wildlife Trust. Their wildflower nursery is now able to grow more than 20000 plants a year for use by local landowners. In partnership with the Woodland Trust 30000 free trees were provided via this project and Northern Devon Natural Solutions . Part of the aim is to slow the movement of water through landscapes and improve water quality by reducing amounts of soil and other nutrients entering ditches , streams and rivers from farmlands
Northern Devon Natural Solutions | Devon Wildlife Trust. The North Devon Natural Solutions team have reported that volunteers from the Torridge Rivers Association area have been reintroducing salmon to the River Torridge . Another project example has been working with a landowner on the River Torridge to gain support through a Countryside Higher Tier agreement. This included working with ELMS (Environmental Land Management Schemes) with work focussing on holding water in the landscape,providing multiple wildlife habitats and delivering " Natural Flood Management" through floodplain reconnection

Wilder Communities
This project is working in the North Devon area to engage with and support communities on a wide range of projects with advice on funding too. There is a Wilder Community award available to groups
Wilder Communities | Devon Wildlife Trust. The project also offers Webinars eg Water and gardens Thursday 3rd December 7-8pm and advice on sources of funding for improving your area for wildlife eg North Devon Coast National Landscape Community Fund ; The National Garden Scheme Community Garden Grants

Sites for Nature : The DWT looks at a range of different designated sites and we have a number in the Taw Torridge Estuary area : Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs) These are the top area of designation and protection ; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) these are the next tier of designation ; County Wildlife Sites (CWS) These are recognised for their county-level importance to Wildlife but don't carry the same level of statutory protections as the others above. There are other designations eg UNESCO Biosphere . DWT in partnership with Devon Biodiversity Records centre and the Devon County Council are hoping to survey as many as possible of the **Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites** (UWS) which are waiting to find if they qualify as County Wildlife Sites. For more information see Sites and Habitats – DBRC Volunteers are being asked for who may be able to help with the surveying. For more details contact volunteering@devonwildlifetrust.org

Beaver Project
DEFRA announced in 2025 that Beavers can be allowed to live wild in England. DWT is managing and supporting projects. Populations already on the river Taw will be allowed to remain and expand naturally. Future beaver reintroductions will need to be managed under a licence system run by Natural England. For more information please contact Dr Matt Holden DWT's Beaver Project Lead. For more information see the link Beavers | Devon Wildlife Trust

Pine Martens project . Some have now been released on Exmoor please see First pine martens released in Exmoor National Park in landmark nature recovery project | Devon Wildlife Trust for more information

Water Voles : The National Trust have reintroduced Water Voles to the Woolacombe area Press Release | Media | National Trust

Devon Bat Survey : For 2026 Devon Wildlife Trust worked with the North Devon Coast National Landscapes and the Devon Bat group to do surveys. The Devon Bat Survey | Devon Wildlife Trust

Wilder Learning. For information about engagement with young people and projects such as Wildlife Champions please see Wilder learning | Devon Wildlife Trust

Corporate Membership
The Trust is relaunching the Corporate membership scheme for companies. For more information see the DWT website How your business can help Devon's wildlife | Devon Wildlife Trust

Debbie Frazer (DWT Barnstaple and District Group Volunteer)19.10.26. Information from the DWT website,volunteer emails , staff updates and the magazine Wild Devon