

Conserving Herefordshire's Ice Age Ponds

September 2020 update

Dear Volunteer,

We hope this finds you well and that you have been enjoying yet another great spell of weather. Here is a brief update on what the team has been doing over the last month.

As always a huge thank to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who have provided support and advice to help us keep our project going at this difficult time.

Pond Surveys

The team have started to carry out detailed pond surveys with some very interesting results already! Unfortunately, numbers of volunteers we have been able to invite has been very restricted, often due to limited parking as well as being limited to a total of six. Hopefully by next Spring we can accommodate a few more people.

As advertised last month we had a session at Croft Castle where we were joined by BBC West Midlands who recorded a piece on the Project which went out at lunchtime and tea time the following week. As well as recording at 'Fish Pool' the team also found a second kettle hole next to it, although this one has been modified and no longer has a pond.



Will being interviewed in his element at Croft Castle (Left). Ian Fairchild explaining the intricacies of Ice Age Geology to Phoebe Weston from The Guardian while Will examines the catch from the Lawn Pool at Moccas Park (Right) Photos: David Hutton.

As well as the piece on BBC Midlands, we were visited by Phoebe Weston, Biodiversity Reporter from Guardian Environment at Moccas park during July, with interviews with Will Watson, Dave Hutton and Ian Fairchild, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/25/blasts-from-the-past-how-ice-age-ponds-are-coming-back-to-life> and we have just heard that BBC Countryfile want to come and see us next spring!

More recently the team have been looking at pond in the north of the our area near Pembridge and near Kington on the Hergest Estate. Here's an exert from one of Giles's reports from one survey day.

*There were actually 54 species recorded at the Grove Farm pond, of which 27 were aquatic and 17 wetland. The other 10 were all very common terrestrial species, except for the Pale Tortoise Beetle *Cassida flaveola* which is somewhat local. I think the rarest of the wetland species was the 2mm long leafhopper *Euconomelus lepidus* ([photo & description](#)) which feeds on spike-rush. Only 80 records for it nationally on NBN ([map](#)) - this could be new for the county.*

The kettle hole survey forms, modified following volunteer feedback have now been tried and tested so you should find them improved if you come to use them next year. The new guide and a presentation to take you through the forms should be on our training page soon.

As mentioned previously we have been working on creating a simple “Walking Pond Survey” that people can undertake, through autumn and winter, in their own time. Full instructions and a short presentation about what this involves are now available to download and watch on our Ice Age Ponds training page <https://www.herefordshirewt.org/iceageponds/ice-age-ponds-training> If you are interested in doing this then please do contact Beth e.andrews@worc.ac.uk to arrange for your survey area details to be sent over to you.

Project Promotion, website and social media

We have put lots of information about our project on our website

<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/iceageponds> We will keep adding to this throughout the project, so please do keep visiting back to find out more about our discoveries and activities.

It now includes;

- a presentation on the project by Dave Hutton. <https://www.herefordshirewt.org/restoring-herefordshires-ice-age-ponds-introduction>
- a presentation(mentioned above) on undertaking the ‘Walking Pond Survey’ by Beth Andrews. <https://www.herefordshirewt.org/iceageponds/ice-age-ponds-training>

We are also using social media, on twitter @buildingstones or @iceageponds or @HerefordshireWT. Instagram @earth_heritage_trust and @herefordshirewildlifetrust and on Facebook so please do follow us to find out what we are up to, especially now that we are visiting more sites.

Ice Age Herefordshire Exhibition

The exhibition is now open and will be open until 28th November, with limited opening times, at the moment –

Tuesday and Wednesday - 2pm to 4pm

Thursday, Friday and Saturday - 11am to 1pm.

The #mammothselfie floor stickers are in place so please make sure to tag us @herefordshirewt and @buildingstones etc

HWT's Wildplay team will be hosting family Ice Age Ponds activities for booked groups of 5 on Saturdays and holidays. For details on how to book please go to the HWT website

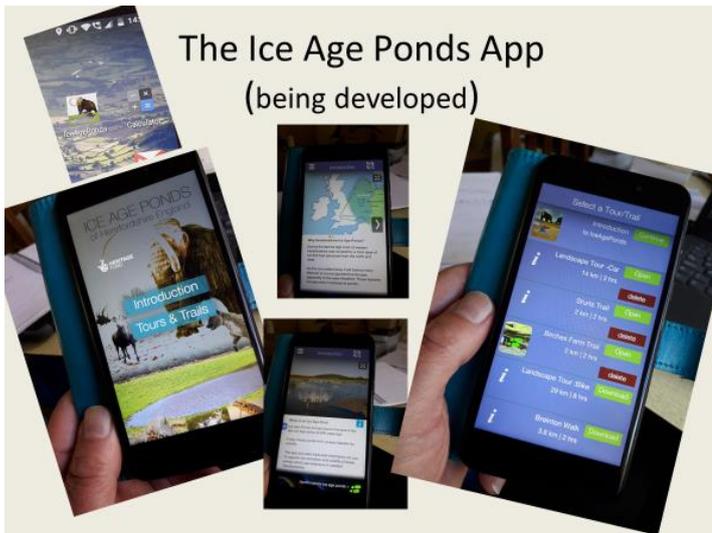
<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/events>

For those unable to make it to the exhibition, you can see the panels produced as part of the Ice Age Ponds project, from the comfort of your own home. Just visit:

<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/iceageponds/ice-age-ponds-herefordshire-museum-exhibition>

You can also find details of some fun ice age activities to try at home.

Ice Age App



The app development is going well, still lots of work to do on it and we will be looking for people to help test and develop it soon. We need to know if they work and if they are fun to do, so if you like apps, guided walks or are a keen cyclist, and are interested in learning more about Ice Age Ponds, please get in touch (e.andrews@worc.ac.uk) and you can join our development team.

Practical pond management

We have engaged contractors on practical management work to improve some of the ponds we produced management plans for last year. This work will help improve the habitat for many species and protect these important sites for the future. Some of the first work carried out was the coppicing and re-pollarding of a pond between Kenchester and National Trust's The Weir Gardens. This will open up the edges of the pool, and improve the marginal habitats which are so important for many different species as well as reduce leaf build up in the water. We will keep you up to date with the work and any opportunities to get involved as they come up.



(Photo: David Hutton.)

Thank you for all your patience while we find our way forward with our project. We are really excited to be back out in the field looking forward to working with you again soon.

Dave, Beth and the whole project team.

29/9/2020