



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss

TEACHING AND STUDENTS

Ecology and Conservation

A short course in Ecology and Conservation is offered within the Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Students learn fundamental concepts of ecology and biodiversity, and humanity's influence on it. Theoretical principles underlying wildlife conservation are examined, with the context of their use in management of various ecosystems. The ecology of woodlands, streams, ponds, grassland and moths is investigated by fieldwork and study of research reports.



OPERATIONS

Biodiversity strategy

The University's campus Masterplan through to 2030 was approved by Council in February 2019 and recognises the importance of green spaces for nature and for people. A Biodiversity and Ecology Strategy and Management Plan is being produced, which outlines the approach to how biodiversity will be protected and enhanced through the lifecycle of the Masterplan. The University is committed to (1) safeguarding existing ecological assets, (2) enhancing campus biodiversity, (3) sustaining and enhancing the great crested newt population, and (4) encouraging site users to engage with the natural environment.



Grounds management

The University considers the natural habitats and biodiversity on campus when managing the grounds. For example, felled timber, brash and dead wood are used to create habitats in woodlands areas, species are planted that are beneficial to insects, and some green spaces are not regularly mown to allow wildflowers to establish.

Species monitoring

An increasing number of staff and students are contributing to the University's knowledge of wildlife species present on campus. In addition, Members of the Grounds team are recording and undertaking regular monitoring as part of their work.



RESEARCH

Ecological Forensics

The School of Life Sciences offers a Ecological Forensics service to ecological consultancies, private individuals and wildlife enthusiasts. The DNA analysis services help to identify species such as bats, otters, mink, pine martens, badgers and rodents from faeces, tissue or hair. The samples received are used to help build up a picture of the genetic diversity and evolutionary history of the species involved.

Jam Grove

Jam Grove was planted in spring 2016 by staff, students and members of the local community. It provides an opportunity for fruit picking throughout the summer months and into the autumn and is a space for everyone to enjoy.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Tocil Wood Conservation

The Tocil Wood Conservation project is run in conjunction with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, a leading local environmental charity. Tocil Wood is the bluebell wood on campus and enjoys protected status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Voluntary work undertaken by students helps to promote biodiversity in the habitat, benefiting wildlife and making it a more pleasant area for people to visit.

The main focus of the project is coppicing. This is a traditional method of woodland management which involves clearing sections of the woodland of young trees. Light can then get down to the forest floor which increases biodiversity in the habitat.



Arden Farm Wildlife Network

The University is a member of the Arden Farm Wildlife Network, which works with landowners to make space for nature. The Wellesbourne campus is taking part in two year project, funded by Severn Trent Water as part of their Boost for Biodiversity Scheme, which aims to significantly increase the number of tree sparrows in the area. Tree sparrows are on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and have declined in the past five years within the area.

At the Wellesbourne campus a wildflower area has been sown with specific pollen and nectar species, a winter wild bird seed mix was sown and ten tree sparrow boxes have also been installed. A total of 47 different species have been seen in the area including brambling, corn bunting, fieldfare, linnet, redwing, and yellowhammer.

Events on campus

The University runs various conservation and wildlife events to which the local community are invited. For example a small orchard was planted in 2019 and members of the public were invited to attend the planting plus a short session on the importance of living landscapes. The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust have also held two project launch events on campus; including a 'Wilder Future for Warwickshire', which aims to engage young people in conservation and to provide them with training.