

Wildlife World

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people's
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UK

Dormouse release

Mountain hares

Surveying water voles

England's last crab apples

Lion Queen

The PTES partner whose work is critical for the future of Africa's iconic carnivore

Overseas

Giant otters

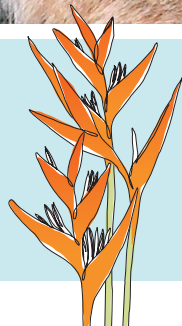
Saiga update

Cloud forest eagles

Ethiopia's mountain monkeys

Laws of the jungle

MPs have passed a raft of legislation relating to the natural environment since Brexit, but what will it do for our wildlife?



Snow business

Protection of snow leopards in Mongolia has been made easier since Tost was officially designated a nature reserve.

Hogs in Notts

Residents of a village in Nottinghamshire have won the much-coveted prize of Britain's Biggest Hedgehog Street.



Bringing the wild back to life

Wildlife World is published by People's Trust for Endangered Species

Our wildlife is disappearing. Almost two thirds of species in the UK have declined in the past 50 years. There's nothing natural or inevitable about this. It can be stopped. And everyone can play a part. That's why People's Trust for Endangered Species exists.

Find out more
www.ptes.org

Asiatic wild dogs

PTES is funding a small wildlife NGO to find ways of changing attitudes towards Asiatic wild dogs in the Annapurna Conservation Area of northern Nepal. Found in very low numbers across much of Asia, these wild dogs – like many carnivores – face persecution because they occasionally take livestock. The good news is they are starting to return to the Annapurna region, so **Yadav Ghimirey** and his team at **Friends of Nature** are working with communities to demonstrate the importance of top predators for ecosystems in the hope of reducing attacks on them.



Welcome

Lions, or more particularly lionesses, had their moment in the sun this summer. Lion populations are under threat, and our Conservation Partner **Amy Dickman** is focusing her carnivore work more widely across African landscapes than ever before.

Her community-focused approach concentrates on reducing human-lion conflict and is transforming attitudes.

Closer to home, we've expanded the northern range of dormice through our latest reintroduction to another woodland in Lancashire, just across the railway tracks to the one we carried out last year. With improvements to hedgerow connectivity, and the likely addition of a dormouse bridge over the railway, the two populations will soon be able to meet and mingle, further securing the future of this new population.

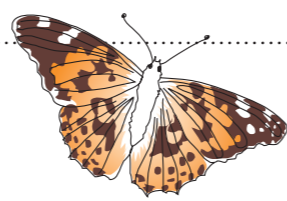
The connectivity theme continues across the country as we persuade hedge owners to revisit how they look after this vital wildlife habitat. Through our *Great British Hedgerow Survey* and complementary *Healthy Hedgerows* app, we're helping owners assess 108km of hedgerow and already recommended specific management actions.

Whilst we suspect dormice use hedges as a corridor to travel along, and occasionally nest in, the hard evidence is thin. In the next issue, we'll bring news of a survey using dormouse footprint tunnels in hedgerows to help us find out more.

Enjoy our stories in this issue. It's your enthusiastic support that keeps us going.



Jill Nelson is the Chief Executive of People's Trust for Endangered Species.



In this edition

- 04 In this issue's **PTES People**, Yan Wang explains how she is bringing wildlife back to her allotment in The Wirral in north-west England.
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Gardener Yan Wang is transforming a small public area of Hoylake on Merseyside for the benefit of a wide diversity of pollinating insects and other wildlife.

I arrived in the UK from China in the late 1980s and initially believed there was no environmental crisis here. Gradually, however, I began to appreciate the scale of habitat loss that was, and still is, going on.

In 2020, after some willow trees were cut down beside a disused football pitch close to where I have an allotment, I got my chance to reverse the decline – well, in our small patch in Hoylake in The Wirral at least.

Together with another allotment holder, we proposed to 'rewild' the area with the fallen willows, while we planted nectar and pollen-rich wildflowers for bees and butterflies on an adjacent grass verge.

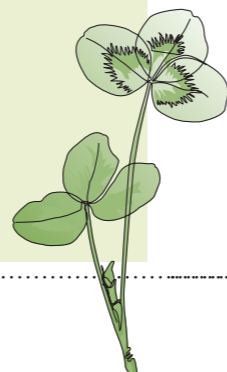
I now have 10 flowerbeds, a log-pile, a wildlife hotel and a site for solitary ground-nesting bees called mining bees. There are about 60 plant species in the beds, a mix of native ones such as white and red campion, yellow rattle and teasel, as well as some domestic, non-invasive and pollen-rich cultivars.

This rich floral diversity has attracted a wide range of insects, spiders and other invertebrates, including ground, click and rove beetles. We're hoping the log-pile may attract stag beetles – though mainly restricted to southern parts of England, they have been reported in nearby Chester in recent years.

There's still a lot to do. Tough grasses from the football pitch invade the beds, so I have to keep them at bay, either through digging them up or covering them with a suppressing sheet. Planting yellow rattle, which parasitises grasses, and cover plants such as creeping comfrey should help with that.

I regularly hear positive and encouraging comments from passers-by. 'Whenever I come here, it puts a smile on my face,' is typical. It's so good to know that a place restoring wildlife is appreciated by other people besides me. ●

“ I regularly hear positive and encouraging comments from passers-by. 'Whenever I come here, it puts a smile on my face,' is typical. ”



Does raft of legislation offer a safe passage for wildlife?

Britain's decision to leave the EU has provided the opportunity to shape laws affecting wildlife for the better, but it's still unclear if it will work out that way.

We can only hope our MPs have learned something about the issues impacting wildlife and the environment over the past five years or so – they have, after all, passed three major pieces of legislation in that time.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Acts in 2020 and the Environment Act in 2021 (coupled with the ambitious 25 Year Environment Plan) form an almost unprecedented sweep of new laws that could have profound consequences for nature in England and Northern Ireland over the coming decades. (Elected assemblies in Scotland and Wales have largely passed their own laws to cover these policy areas.)

Of course, there was no way they couldn't have done this. Brexit meant the Government had to plan for leaving both the Common Agricultural and Common Fisheries Policies, but some new measures are genuine innovations.

For example, the way we subsidise farmers in the future could have genuinely far-reaching consequences – that's because some farming practices have a significantly negative impact on our mammals, songbirds, and insects. If we can improve the way we manage our farmland, we can bring back wildlife right across the country.

And the big idea behind the emerging subsidy system is that it will pay farmers to look after their soil, hedgerows and woodlands and to restore insect-rich wildflower meadows. There is even an option allowing landowners to go down the rewilding route.

Can you imagine such an outcome a decade ago? In 2012, the view that most people – including MPs and even civil servants within DEFRA – had of rewilding was that it would lead to packs of wolves roaming the countryside leaving dead sheep strewn about in their wake.

The situation is changing all the time – some experts feel the more radical provisions are already being watered down, and there is opposition from MPs in all three main parties and farming groups*.

The Environment Act is mostly less radical, though it does contain one bold and interesting measure. The so-called Biodiversity

Net Gain (from now on, BNG) policy requires that developers – of housing and almost all other infrastructure – compensate for the impact of their cul de sacs, factories or new railways and roads by restoring wildlife either on that site or elsewhere.

More specifically, they must use a custom-made metric to calculate the number of biodiversity units on the land they are building on and then put back an equivalent number of units – and here's the important bit – with an added 10 per cent on top.

Again, it's far from perfect. Environmental consultants and academics have raised serious issues about how BNG will operate and questioned whether it's really a way to protect wildlife or actually a way of letting development carry on unhindered. It's complicated, and only time will tell if it will have a positive impact.

The same act has also set up a body called the Office for

Environmental Protection (OEP), which replaces the oversight of laws affecting wildlife that was previously provided by membership of the EU. Already in its short life, the OEP has begun an investigation into the way water companies pollute our rivers with sewage, and some environmentalists believe it could make a real difference.

The pros and cons of the Fisheries Act are even more finely balanced. Amendments to the act, inserted by members of the House of Lords, that would have made it a legal requirement to have remote monitoring on vessels over a certain length (to make sure they are observing bycatch and quota regulations) and to set

sustainable fishing limits were both removed by MPs.

All this legislation is a reminder that how we care for wildlife in this country isn't just down to committed conservationists or the amount of money we spend, though both of these are critically important. It's also about how we spend that money – some of it public money – and where or who it comes from.

And it suggests that if we have legislators who genuinely care about, and understand why, wildlife is declining, then they are perhaps more likely to do something about it. ●



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James Fair is a journalist specialising in wildlife conservation stories and editor of *Wildlife World Magazine*.

* see news on page 7

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From the south-west to the Scottish Highlands, our work is helping a range of species. But we also need UK and world leaders to step up and protect nature for the benefit of all people.

Filling in the gaps at Rough Hill

Managing our West Country apple orchard nature reserve involves balancing its role as an orchard with the needs of wildlife, especially insects.



Work began in early Autumn to rejuvenate our old hedgerow at Rough Hill in Worcestershire. The orchard is situated on a steep slope leading down to the River Avon, and at the very top runs a public footpath bounded by the hedge. Over the decades, the hedge has become more like a line of old trees and the footpath was swamped with bramble and scrub. Although we value bramble and scrub as a habitat for wildlife, it was beginning to make the path impassable. The work will make the path safer and more pleasant to walk along. We will also be managing the hedgerow in sections, coppicing it and planting new native trees and shrubs in the gaps. ●

Find out more
www.ptes.org/roughhill

Reds just love the high life

Releasing red squirrels into newly established forest areas is working so well that our partner in Scotland is going to carry out another four over the next two years.



Efforts to expand red squirrel populations across the Scottish Highlands have been a great success story of the last decade. Since 2016, **Trees for Life** – with the help of PTES funding – has moved



and released nearly 200 squirrels into ten separate locations, from Plockton near the Isle of Skye to Golspie in the north-east. This has only been possible as new woodlands have been established in these areas.

All the new populations are doing well, both colonising the surrounding habitat and expanding away from the release sites – up to 17km away in the case of those at Shieldaig.

Now with more assistance from PTES, Trees for Life wants to carry out a further four translocations. This will enable us to have created new populations in all of the areas we consider to be suitable habitat across the Scottish Highlands, it says.

More good news for our native red! ●

Rare mammal makes unexpected appearance in London borough

Exactly how a pine marten – a species, these days, more associated with the Scottish Highlands – found its way to south-west London is unclear.



Researchers working on ZSL's hedgehog monitoring programme HogWatch – which PTES helped to fund – got a surprise when they were reviewing images taken on remote cameras deployed in Kingston-upon-Thames in south-west London earlier this year.

Among the usual pictures of foxes, domestic cats and the occasional hedgehog, there was one of an animal that hasn't been seen in our capital city in hundreds of years.

It was a pine marten, the rarest species of mustelid in the UK, mostly today found in Scotland and in some parts of northern England and Wales.

The nearest population to London is more than 100km away, in the New Forest in Hampshire, and it's unlikely the maverick marten came from there.

So, how did it end up in the suburban streets of Kingston? Possibly, it's been unofficially released, or perhaps accidentally escaped, from a private collection. In any case, the good news is that this lovely relative of weasels and stoats appeared to be in good health, which could suggest it's finding enough to eat in the local area.

All eyes will now be on whether more sightings of this, or indeed other, pine martens occur. ●

On alert to defend wildlife laws

Along with other wildlife conservation groups, PTES is concerned the Government is going to remove special protections for wildlife sites.



Our partners at **Wildlife and Countryside Link**, a coalition of the UK's biggest and best-known conservation and environment groups, are busy preparing for possible attempts to water down, or scrap completely, regulations that protect some of our most important wildlife sites.

Opposition to the Habitats Regulations, which apply to Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, wildlife sites originally protected under EU legislation, has been building within the Government for some years now. Many MPs believe they impede economic activity and job creation.

In fact, a government review in 2012 didn't find this to be the case, but following our departure from the EU, ministers can now remove them if they can persuade Parliament to back such a move.

PTES will continue to make the case for strong regulation of wildlife sites, especially since the Government has committed itself to halting the decline of biodiversity by 2030 and to protecting 30 per cent of our land and sea area for nature by the same date – the so-called 30x30 target.

We believe it's unlikely we'll achieve this if important protections such as the Habitats Regulations disappear. ●

Planet Earth's last chance saloon

World leaders meet in Canada for meeting of the global biodiversity convention with the aim of agreeing measures to halt wildlife declines.



Worldwide, more than one million species are threatened with extinction – species we are all too familiar with, species that – with your help – we're working hard to protect.

This year the UN summit on biodiversity, known as COP15, the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, is scheduled to take place in December in Canada.

This is a once in a decade opportunity for world leaders to set nature-positive goals to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 to save life on Earth.

There is hope in the face of the catastrophic extinction we face, but it relies on our leaders taking the threats seriously. COP15 has been delayed time and again. Now it's actually taking place, we need to make it count. We need to ensure our leaders take it seriously and take this opportunity to make decisions that will – finally – make a difference. ●

New insights into mountain monkey

Endemic Ethiopian primate splits into two subspecies, raising dilemmas about conservation policies for an animal that is only found in the country's Bale Mountains.



Funds provided by PTES helped scientists at the **University of Calgary** in Canada make an important scientific breakthrough regarding a rare and little-known primate called the Bale monkey.

This small monkey *Chlorocebus djamdjamensis* is only found in one small area – the Bale Mountains – of southern Ethiopia, and is unusual in being a specialist bamboo feeder.

The work carried out by researcher **Dr Addisu Mekonnen Kassie** and his team has established that Bale monkeys can be split into two distinct subspecies, one that occupies mountain forests where bamboo is plentiful, while the other lives in forest fragments where this favoured food is much less abundant.

Addisu is proposing the two subspecies should now be known as the Bale Mountains and djam-djam monkeys.

PTES conservation research manager **Nida Al-Fulaij** says the finding suggests the effects of human habitat disturbance is a change in behaviour and the divergence of the two populations.

It highlights the importance of habitat connectivity making sure that populations don't become isolated, she says. 'This is especially pertinent now that countries are being asked to protect 30 per cent of land and sea for nature by 2030. Bolstering habitat between isolated populations is critically important.' ●

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:

8th November 2022, 7 – 8.30pm

Wild Life Drawing Online: Dormice, Via Zoom Tickets £10 + small booking fee. 50% of proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to PTES.

This virtual art class will have an introduction from Ian White, our Dormouse Officer, and will help you reconnect with nature through drawing, all while raising money for our conservation efforts.

Find out more
www.ptes.org/get-involved



Saving Peak's hares from terminal decline



Mountain hares are Britain's only truly native hare or rabbit, but they've been largely eliminated from most of the country south of Scotland. One of the few species in the UK that turns white in winter, mountain hares were entirely absent from England and Wales for the past 6,000 years until they were reintroduced to areas of the Peak District, or South Pennines, in the 1870s. And they are still there today. But the species is vulnerable to the effects of a changing climate, and that's why PTES funded Dr Carlos Bedson to research the reasons for this and what can be done about it.

©Mark Avery / Shutterstock.com

Hare today, hare tomorrow



Rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns are not good news for the Peak District's mountain hares, but they don't have to spell the end for them.

There are an estimated 3,500 mountain hares in the Peak District today. As their name suggests, they're adapted to a cold environment and are comfortable in temperatures as low as -30°C. And, of course, they have evolved to be camouflaged in a snowy landscape – the reason they turn white in winter. But as a result of climate change, temperatures across the UK are rising, and Bedson has found that by 2050, available habitat for the species in the Peak District will have shrunk from around 170km² today to just 20km².

Drying out

This decline will be largely down to climate changes that bring about changes in vegetation. Mountain hares feed on heather, especially during the winter, which brown hares can't cope with, but warmer, drier summers will see the heather uplands of the Peaks become grassy habitats, which will be more suited to brown hares. This could dry out some of the blanket bog areas, leading to more heather cover, but it's a delicate balance, and generally it's thought that any changes will be bad for mountain hares.

White not right

The warming climate is having an impact in another way. The moulting of their summer coats into white winter ones is triggered by shortening daylight hours and falling temperatures, but this isn't being matched by expected levels of snowfall. As a result, mountain hares are increasingly mismatched to their environment – white when the landscape is brown – for more days of the year, up to 35 in fact, according to Bedson.

Biodiversity benefits

But it isn't all doom and gloom. Some areas of the Peak District such as Dove Stone RSPB Reserve are being restored so that they retain a greater amount of the rainfall that falls in natural peatbogs. This actually results in a greater diversity of vegetation – not just heather – than in other parts of the national park, and Benson's research has shown that mountain hares are thriving at Dove Stone. This restoration is being carried out both to benefit biodiversity (at Dove Stone, there's a particular focus on nesting waders such as dunlin), as well as to increase carbon storage. Happily, it's proving to be a boon for mountain hares, too. ●

Scrapbook

We love hearing from PTES people, whether supporters or project leaders. Pictures, reports, emails, web posts and letters give a great sense of your passion for wildlife, so please keep them coming!

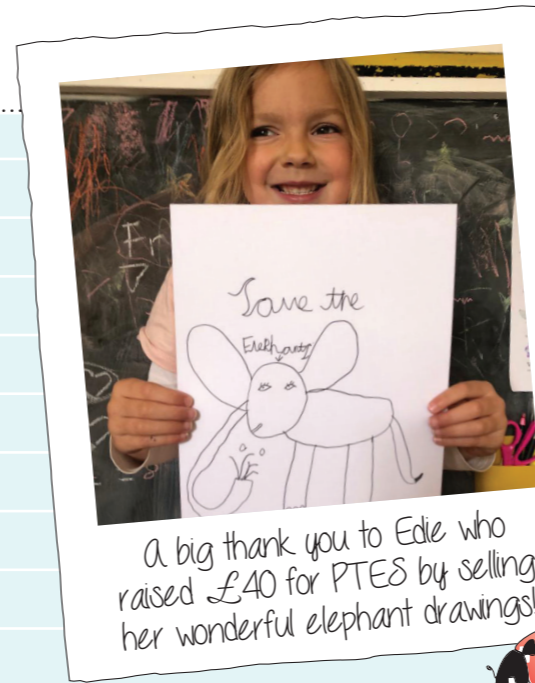


Fantastic fundraisers

We'd like to say a big thank you to the pupils of **Haberdashers' Crayford Academy** in Kent. The students held a fundraising event and raised a brilliant £321 for PTES.

And artist **Abigail Burt** has raised a wonderful £550 to help wildlife through her project **Lost-Wax for Lost-Species**. Abigail invited over 100 artists to sculpt endangered animals from wax, which she then cast in bronze and sold at a fundraising auction. Thank you Abigail!

Find out more www.kinstinctarts.com/



A big thank you to Edie who raised £40 for PTES by selling her wonderful elephant drawings!

My role at PTES

Zoe Roden
Design and Communications Officer



Hello, I hope you're enjoying reading this magazine because putting it together is a big part of my role. If you've received something in the post, or see something online from PTES, I've designed it. That starts with thinking about the content, making it look attractive and instantly recognisable as from us, as well as ensuring it's an interesting and inspiring read. One of my favourite tasks is looking for photos of the species we're helping. That can be a real challenge when there are only a few individuals left. It's also hard not to get sidetracked (of course I never do!) and become distracted by images of weird and wonderful creatures – some of which I've never even heard of, despite studying Zoology and working in animal conservation since 2000.

I put a lot of thought into the images we use, which can lead to some interesting conversations in the office: 'Does this dormouse look happy to be in its new woodland home?', 'Will people want to see these stag beetle larvae so close up?', 'Do people want to see another hedgehog photo?' (the answers, by-the-way, were yes, yes and yes).

I also run our Instagram account, with our small social media team (everyone at PTES covers several job roles), which has grown into a lovely online community. I love seeing the images and stories other wildlife enthusiasts share.

I never, ever get bored, because my role covers all aspects of the work PTES is involved in. And I can prove this because I'm in my 21st year at PTES (I know some of you have been supporting PTES for even longer, thank you). Let's see how much more wildlife we can help together in the next 21 years!



Toad in the box

We use dormouse boxes to monitor dormice nationwide. But other animals can sometimes make use of them; we often find other rodents and birds. But have you heard of toads using dormouse boxes? Since 2009, 18 dormouse sites had amphibians using dormouse nest boxes and 50 records of common toads were found in surveys of hazel dormice nest boxes and tree cavities usually used by bats. One toad was found at the dizzying height of three metres – and there's a chance these amphibians could be climbing even higher!

Read more here ptes.org/the-secret-lives-of-toads-in-trees



Dear PTES,

My school, **St Alban's CE Primary School**, has been working to make our grounds hedgehog friendly, with log piles, a wildlife pond and no less than five hedgehog houses! We're also taking part in Hedgehog Friendly Campus's Big Hog Friendly Litter Pick challenge.

I've built a hedgehog home with my dad after I went to the school's nature community roadshow. We hope we'll see a prickly visitor soon!

Lily



Hopefully the hedgehog houses will be occupied soon!



Stag surprise

Over 11,000 stag beetle records were submitted this year and more than a hundred new surveyors joined the European transect survey. We're still verifying the Great Stag Hunt data and will bring you the results soon. We also now have over 2000 log piles on our map. If you haven't already mapped yours, please go to www.stagbeetles.ptes.org.

One of our surveyors, Simon, managed to capture the exact moment a male stag beetle emerged from the ground and shared his photos with us (right) and of the 'emergence holes' they leave behind (below).



Stable and secure

Last year in July we told you about the discovery of a colony of rare greater horseshoe bats, miles from their usual west country stronghold, in West Sussex. Our friends at the **Vincent Wildlife Trust** were trying to purchase the old building the bats roosted in. We contributed so the building, an old stable block, could be secured as the bats' home. Happily, enough money was raised to buy the building, so the bats have a home. Thank you everyone who helped.



Hedge of heaven

Volunteers with the **Norfolk Wildlife Trust** (left) survey a hedge as part of our summer series of Hedgerow Health check training days. The training covers wildlife-friendly hedge management and participants put into practice the **Great British Hedgerow Survey**. Data gathered through the survey help us monitor the health of the UK's hedges. Adding the data to our survey website also produces management suggestions tailored to each hedge.

Lion heart

Lions will only survive if conservationists make bold, brave decisions and devise innovative strategies – and that’s what PTES Conservation Partner Amy Dickman is doing across swathes of East Africa where lions are found.

Imagine, says Amy Dickman, joint chief executive of the conservation group Lion Landscapes, that you were an alien and came down to Earth for the day.

What do you think you would make of cars? ‘You’d see all these metal creatures storming around and killing and injuring god knows how many people a year,’ she points out. ‘And yet, we still have them around and, not only that, we pay for them, too.’

‘But, of course,’ she goes on, ‘cars – on the whole – make our lives better, so it’s a choice we are happy to make.’

Many people living in rural parts of countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia also live with dangerous entities that can kill and maim, but – on the whole – they’re not cars, they’re cats. Big cats. Predators such as lions and leopards, and also other carnivores like wild dogs and hyenas, and even some herbivores such as elephants and hippos.

And unlike our relationship with cars, these people don’t get many, if any, benefits from the wildlife they’re forced to live alongside.

In fact – unless they live in an area popular with western tourists – the wildlife is largely a drain on their pockets. Lions and

leopards take their cattle, goats and sheep and, in some areas, they’re excluded from traditional grazing grounds to protect these same wild species. No wonder they occasionally resort to illegally killing them with poisoned carcasses or snares. These can be horribly cruel deaths, but livestock are many communities’ most valuable possessions. Of course they’re going to do anything they can to protect them.

As Amy says, ‘We are expecting people to carry on living with lions as a species for a pittance, and I’m amazed this has persisted for even this long. The model is broken, and we need to do better.’

But just how broken is the model? How are lions faring? Latest research suggests there are around 24,000 wild lions in Africa today, a stark decrease in abundance relative to the estimated 200,000 about 100 years ago. Other studies show that lion numbers declined by 43 per cent in the two decades between 1995 and 2015, though they went up in some southern African countries. The really big losses took place in West, Central and East Africa.

As a comparison, the latest tiger population is put at around 4,000



Amy Dickman has worked on solving human-wildlife conflict since graduating with a degree in zoology from the University of Liverpool in 1997. She set up the Ruaha Carnivore Project in 2009, and it now has a team of more than 50 people dedicated to devising ways people and predators can live alongside each other.

Lions in the landscape

Lions used to be found over a broad swathe of Africa but have been eliminated from much of the continent over the past century. Today, they're found over an area covering 3.4 million km², about one quarter of their original range. Listed below, and shown on the map below right, are their five most important strongholds, all in Eastern and Southern Africa.

1. The Serengeti and Masai Mara region of Tanzania and Kenya is the most northerly of the species' strongholds and probably home to more than 3,000 lions.
2. The greater Ruaha landscape of central Tanzania has the second-largest lion population in Africa. It's a relatively unknown and under-researched area, and Amy Dickman's project was the first to be established here in 2009.



3. With an area of more than 50,000km² – that's two and half times the size of Wales – the Selous is the largest and most important protected area for lions in Africa, with an estimated 5,000 or more.

4. Northern Botswana/Southern Zimbabwe is the next lion hotspot. It includes Hwange National Park, where Cecil the lion was controversially hunted and killed by American dentist Walter Palmer in 2015.



5. The most southerly of the lion strongholds is north-east South Africa and southern Mozambique, and includes the world-famous Kruger National Park.



ABOVE: Amy Dickman pioneered the use of remote cameras to enable local villages earn money for community initiatives.
LEFT: Among big cats, lions are more numerous than tigers and snow leopards, but rarer than leopards and jaguars.
FAR LEFT: One of the biggest threats to lions and other large carnivores is conflict with livestock herders.

individuals, while leopards number something like 700,000 in Africa alone. So, lions are definitely in trouble, but they are not – Amy stresses – about to go extinct any time soon. They need help, but there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic that they can survive into the foreseeable future as long as we do the right thing. But what is the right thing? How do we make space for lions? 'We need to make dangerous wildlife a net value to people, and then for those people to choose to have them and feel they have a genuine choice,' Amy says.

Over more than the past decade, Amy – recently made the director of University of Oxford's prestigious Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) – has been working in Ruaha National Park in central Tanzania, working out why lions are declining and then trying to come up with solutions to these problems. As reported in *Wildlife World* numerous times over recent years, the solution she arrived at was to deploy remote cameras in villages across the park. Visiting wildlife is recorded, earning those villages points depending on the species, with predators

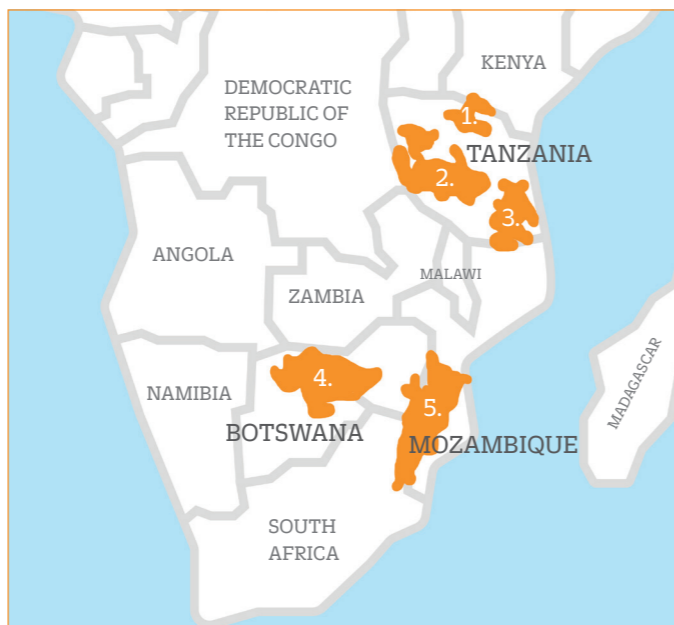
gaining more points than herbivores. Every three months, the points are totalled, and the group of villages with the most gets a \$2,000 cash prize. The point is to directly link the presence of wildlife with benefits for the local community – of course, species such as lions, leopards and hyenas also bring problems, as they don't only predate livestock, they can also be a direct threat to the people themselves. This results in conflict and – quite regularly – illegal killing of these animals. Amy's abiding principle is that the benefits of having them must outweigh any difficulties they cause. And now with her new initiative, Lion Landscapes, Dickman, together with colleague Alayne Cotterill who runs a similar lion conservation programme in Kenya, is taking this idea of wildlife adding value to people's lives one step further. The Lion Carbon project is perhaps the most innovative of these, a programme that raises international finance for communities in Zambia based on the intact ecosystems that sequester or store carbon, thus offsetting those released by the burning of fossil fuels and helping to reduce the impacts of climate change.

important large ecosystems for lions and other carnivores. More than \$4.3 million has been paid out, with funding also going to train and pay 105 community scouts to enhance wildlife protection in partnership with state-funded parks and wildlife rangers. Amy says the idea is to use lions as a barometer for the health of the ecosystem. 'The fact that you've got habitat, the fact that you've got prey and the fact that you've got tolerance for these species – all these things are represented in the presence of top carnivores. And landscapes with a higher density of top carnivores are worth more than those that are below their carrying capacity,' she says. Another innovation Lion Landscapes is working on is Lion Friendly Beef, a variation on the concept of, for example, rainforest friendly coffee, whereby consumers are guaranteed that the product they are buying won't have had adverse environmental impacts (and they usually pay a premium for it). Both these ideas could eventually be working across much broader areas of Africa where lions are found. That's crucial if lions and other charismatic species are to have a real future because they provide ongoing, sustainable funding for their conservation. At present, conservationists are mostly fire fighting in their efforts to protect wildlife while – as Amy puts it – there are huge conflagrations breaking out all around them.

She accepts that many people will find these market-based solutions to wildlife conservation problems difficult to stomach because they worry they give the impression that nature's only importance is in its commercial value. 'My argument is I would love to see a different world where we don't value Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and dollars over everything else,' Amy says. 'I would love that. But it is the current system, and we have so little time to turn the tide of biodiversity loss. And it's not as if we are saying wildlife is only worth what its credit value is, it still retains all its other value, its ecological value.'

Lion Landscapes is also continuing to advocate more standard mechanisms for protecting lions – helping livestock herders acquire lion-proof bomas, for example, is another way to reduce conflict, while the Lion Defenders programme – in which local people are trained as wildlife rangers – has been hugely successful.

The challenges facing conservationists to protect wildlife both in Africa and the rest of the world should not be underestimated, but the work and vision of scientists like Amy Dickman and her many colleagues shows what's possible. If we can take account of how people live – and even more importantly – want to live, then lions and all the many and varied species in the food chain beneath them will survive and thrive well into the future. ●



LEFT: The map shows the five most important lion populations in Africa. There are also good numbers in Namibia and southern Botswana, and a small relict population of Gir lions in India, a reminder the species was once found over much of Africa, Asia and even Europe.

Conservation Partnerships

Conservation research manager **Nida Al-Fulaij** reports good news from our conservation partners, with Mongolia's snow leopards, Java's slow lorises and Iran's Persian leopards all doing well, thanks to the work of the dedicated and brilliant scientists we fund.

Snow leopards, Mongolia, Bayarjargal Agvaantseren, Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation



The future of Mongolia's snow leopards – the world's second largest population – is looking up thanks to the creation of the country's first federal nature reserve set up for their protection.

Tost Nature Reserve is vast, covering an area about one third the size of Wales, and the work to create it was led by our conservation partner, **Bayara Agvaantseren**.

Now the nitty gritty of ensuring Tost is properly managed begins, and that's why we're funding a second five-year partnership with Bayara's **Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation (SLCF)**.

In June, the South Gobi Provincial Government approved a five-year plan with five key conservation targets. Snow leopards, ibex (wild goats), argali (mountain sheep), a rare, native almond bush and archaeological sites will all benefit from concerted efforts to protect them, and they – in turn – will help the development of a sustainable model for tourism. With this in mind, Tost has recently appointed a

woman with a background in tourism called Serjmyadag Erdenejargal to be its director.

Another vital task will be ensuring Tost is properly monitored – both to look for evidence of threats such as poaching of snow leopards and other species, and also to assess how well populations are faring.

Seven PTES-funded community rangers have been patrolling the region in recent years, but they've only been able to cover 80 per cent of it. With the establishment of the official reserve, the local government administration has provided funds for an additional three permanent rangers, which should mean the whole area can now be monitored.

Expanding the team already seems to be paying dividends. Snow leopards are very rarely seen, but in June, community ranger Davaa spotted some movement and was delighted to be able to photograph the head of a snow leopard as it peered down at him from the top of an adjacent hill. Other sightings included one wolf, 41 ibex, 65 argali, 88 black-tailed gazelles and numerous other species.

Equally as rewarding was that they saw no signs of illegal activity, suggesting Tost has a bright future ahead. ●

The future of Mongolia's snow leopards is looking up thanks to the creation of a dedicated nature reserve for them.



© Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation



© Dan Gane/Shutterstock.com



© Vladimir Semenov/Shutterstock.com

Saigas, Uzbekistan Elena Bykova, Saiga Conservation Alliance

Our mother-daughter conservation partners in Uzbekistan, **Elena Bykova** and **Olya Esipova**, went back to the Aral sea to carry out annual surveys earlier this spring, with mixed fortunes.

Heavy rains earlier in the year had made one of the key roads impassable. In the western Aral, exploratory drilling for natural gas, plus new road construction, has also caused a lot of disturbance.

Elena and Olya interviewed workers to find out what work has been done, what more is planned and where they'd seen wildlife during this disruption. Reports of saigas appear to have dwindled as the animals have been pushed out of the area.

In other areas, they gathered evidence of other species that are thriving. Rare four-lined snakes – capable of growing to a length of 1.8m and more – Russian tortoises (shown above), tolai hares and Asian badgers were all caught on camera traps.

Nocturnal surveys were equally successful with jerboas, Pallas' cats and Brandt's hedgehogs all spotted. The team will soon head out to look for evidence of saigas in other parts of the region. ●



Slow lorises, Java Anna Nekaris, Little Fireface Project

Our Conservation Partner **Anna Nekaris** and her team at **Little Fireface Project (LFP)** in Java, have been celebrating the 10-year anniversary of their research station at Cipaganti.

Anna and her students have been conducting lots of research on slow loris behaviour and working hard with local farmers to ensure everything they do is as wildlife friendly as possible.

They also often have to involve themselves in returning lorises, illegally caught for the pet trade, back to the wild. This is harder than it sounds – lorises are nocturnal feeders on plant sap (or gum), nectar, fruits, invertebrates and even birds' eggs and have very special requirements.

LFP Indonesian project leader **Katey Hedger** has been working alongside the

local conservation agency BKSDA to ensure releases of confiscated animals are carried out as effectively as possible.

Katey has put a stop to releases of lorises that have sadly had their teeth removed (this happens because they have a toxic bite which is said to be extremely painful to humans) as they would inevitably starve. She also does habitat surveys so that animals are released in the right areas and at night time when they feel most comfortable moving off into the trees.

This shows that good relationships with local authorities can make all the difference, that it's possible to release animals in good health and into habitats which have the food they need to thrive. Whilst LFP's main focus is not welfare, ensuring released lorises survive is critical. ●



© Little Fireface Project

To give them the best chance of survival, slow lorises should be returned to the wild at night.

Persian leopards, Iran Mohammad Farhadinia, Future4Leopards



Whilst snow leopards have remained elusive for Bayara's team, **Mohammad Farhadinia**, our conservation partner working on Persian leopards, has reported notably different fortunes for his team in Iran.

In spring, they hosted some special guests at Tandoureh National Park to celebrate World Wildlife Day. After a tour of the local natural history museum and listening to some speeches, the visitors were taken out by the rangers.

As well as spotting several wildcats, stone martens, foxes and hundreds of bezoar wild goats, they were privileged and delighted to see five – yes five – individual leopards on their evening drive. ●



© Future4Leopards

Lions, Tanzania Amy Dickman, Ruaha Carnivore Project



Though we hear and read much about the conflict between humans and wildlife, but coexistence is possible. **Amy Dickman**, our conservation partner in Tanzania, reports that most interactions between lions and livestock pass without incident.

Amy's job is to ensure peaceful coexistence is adopted and promoted by local herders. One of the key steps is to keep livestock tightly herded in secure bomas – community stockades or corrals – at night, thus reducing attacks to an absolute minimum and leaving plenty of space for wildlife to live alongside people.

If a community's cattle and goats are safe, they'll tend to leave the wildlife alone. ●



© Amy Dickman

Hedgehog Treat

People living on one road in the village of Keyworth in Nottinghamshire have won a unique competition and been crowned Britain's Biggest Hedgehog Street.

It boasts 43 hedgehog highways and includes ramps and gaps in breeze block walls. It's been going since July 2021 and now it's been identified as Britain's Biggest Hedgehog Street.

The street in question is Dale Road in the village of Keyworth, just south of Nottingham. Since 2021, people living on the street have agreed to put gaps in their fences and walls to allow hedgehogs to roam over a wider area.

The residents' work has been led by Jenni Manning-Ohren. 'Being crowned 'Britain's Biggest Hedgehog Street' is amazing!' Jenni said. 'My neighbours and I have been helping local hedgehogs for a couple of years now, but hearing about this competition spurred us on to create even more highways around Keyworth and to get more people involved.'

People who hadn't seen hedgehogs for 30 years are now having them come through their gardens, Jenni added, and it's also helped create closer community ties. 'It's amazing how hedgehogs can bring people together,' she said.

Hedgehog Street is a joint initiative of PTES and The British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS). It was set up to encourage local people to collaborate on making their gardens more hedgehog friendly, and one of the easiest steps they can take is removing barriers so that the hogs have a larger area of habitat available to them.

Hedgehog Street's Grace Johnson said Dale Road was a fantastic example of how communities can come together for wildlife conservation. 'We are thrilled to see that their efforts are paying off with regular sightings,' Grace added. 'They're very worthy winners.'

Hedgehog Street also recommends that people with gardens make sure there are leaves, twigs and wild areas for hedgehogs to nest and feed in, to provide food and water and to record all sightings on the Big Hedgehog Map.

Among British mammals, hedgehogs particularly need human help and intervention, with rural populations declining by between 30-75 per cent across the countryside since 2000. ●

Find out more www.hedgehogstreet.org



Britain's Biggest Hedgehog Street



► Dale Road, Keyworth, Nottinghamshire.

With 43 hedgehog highways, part of a wider wildlife project involving the whole of Keyworth. The project has also connected with other streets.

► Young Hog Heroes, 1st Goostrey Cubs, Cheshire.

The Cubs are encouraging 18 gardens near the scout hut they use to link up with hedgehog highways, and they've planted a hedge at the back. The Cubs also made their own hedgehog home.

► Community Hog Heroes, Alvechurch, Worcestershire.

Local volunteers polled village residents to find out which gardens hedgehogs are using and mapped sightings, as well as raising awareness.



LEFT: Cubs in Cheshire are helping hedgehogs by linking up gardens behind their scout hut.

BELOW LEFT: Putting holes in fences expands the available hog habitat.

RIGHT: Hedgehogs love leaf litter to sleep and nest in.



© 1st Goostrey Cubs, Co. Kerry / Shutterstock.com, Keyworth Highway

Bridge of mice

Reintroduced dormouse populations in northern England are separated by a railway line – but will soon be connected by a special dormouse friendly bridge.

The dormouse recolonisation of northern Lancashire and southern Cumbria continues, thanks to the work of PTES, along with partners including Natural England and the Back on Our Map project led by the University of Cumbria.

Another group of dormice have been released into Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as part of concerted efforts to bring one of the UK's most threatened mammals back to the north-west of England.

A total of 39 were released into a woodland a few miles from the original reintroduction site. Though the two areas are separated by a railway line, a dormouse bridge – a concept proved to work through trials at our reserve Briddlesford Woods on the Isle of Wight – will eventually help to connect the two sites.

It's hoped the bridge will thus enable the two populations to integrate, allowing a greater degree of genetic mixing.

The 30 released last year are being closely monitored and are doing well, with up to five litters counted last year and 17 of the original animals recorded again this year.

'Dormice are incredibly rare, so it's time to take action,' said PTES' Dormouse and Training Officer Ian White.

Dormouse numbers have declined by roughly half in the past two decades and they are no longer found in 17 English counties. The loss of traditional coppicing in our woodlands has reduced the extent of scrubby vegetation on which they depend for food, shelter and breeding sites and has contributed to their disappearance.

This happened in Arnsdale and Silverdale after the end of World War II, but in recent decades, coppicing started up again, and the woods are now fantastic habitat for dormice. It's hoped and expected that they will do well in their new home. ●



The return of dormice to northern England continues



Volunteers are helping to monitor the released dormice.

© Peter Houghton

The Great British Apple Hunt

Just what is a crab apple tree and where can you find one? The answer isn't as straightforward as you'd think, but new research hopes to get to bottom of the puzzle.

Ecologists across Britain are on the hunt for crab apple trees in an effort to identify where they are found – or indeed whether we have any left.

It's usually thought anything growing wild in the countryside producing those recognisable, small, green, bitter fruits is a crab apple. But there's a good chance our native apple species has picked up genes from many non-native ones brought here over the past two millennia.

Funded through the City of London Corporation's City Bridge Trust, the work is coordinated by PTES' Orchard Biodiversity Officer Steve Oram, together with colleagues in the UK Orchard Network.

'We're looking to see if we can conclusively say something in the field is a native crab apple *Malus sylvestris*,' says Steve.

Other varieties have been arriving on our shores ever since the Romans got here,

and they readily hybridised with the crab apple to the extent that it's no longer clear what's a truly wild crab apple and what isn't. 'Everything might have hybridised over the years,' says Steve.



The new project's crab apple hunters are operating in numerous counties, mainly in the south and south-west and East Anglia, though there are also some in the Midlands and West Yorkshire.

They are focusing on physical descriptions of the trees they find, including details of their flowers, fruits, leaves, structure and shape – as well as what the fruits actually taste like. Samples are also being taken for DNA analysis.

But why is it important to know where our native crab apple trees are or if indeed there are any that don't have other *Malus* genes in them? As well as being interesting in its own right, it can also tell us something about how other species might have changed in the same time period, and this could be useful in our efforts to protect and conserve all our indigenous trees, plants and other flora. ●

© Steve Oram

Ratty rafts

Looking for water voles can be time consuming and difficult, but a new idea could help track them down.

PTES is behind a new trial that could make monitoring water voles simpler and faster.

The standard way of determining whether there are any water voles on a stretch of river is to walk along the bank looking for droppings or feeding signs.

This can be intensive work, with some areas proving inaccessible because of thick vegetation, which lessens the effectiveness of the survey. Scrambling down steep river banks takes up valuable time.

The new idea is to put small



latrine rafts on the river itself, tethered to a tree or the bank to stop them floating away. Water voles are naturally curious, and it's hoped they will use these rafts, which are more easily visible to surveyors, to mark their territory with their droppings.

The rafts are currently being trialed in a number of locations by professional ecologists from local wildlife trusts, the RSPB and National Trust, with the idea they could be rolled out more widely if they work. Rafts are placed roughly 50m apart over a 500m stretch of river.

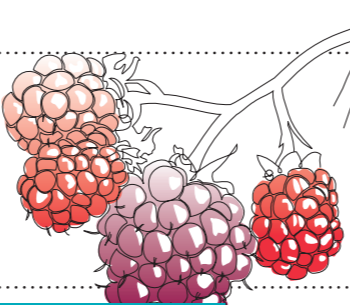
PTES' Water Vole Officer **Emily Sabin** believes the rafts could really help anyone monitoring the presence of water voles in an area. 'You can check these rafts with a pair of binoculars,' she says, 'which means you can potentially survey more of a riverbank more quickly. Droppings may also be better preserved on a raft than on the ground.'

Counting voles

- ▶ PTES launched the National Water Vole Monitoring Programme (NWVMP) in 2015.
- ▶ Volunteers survey 500m of riverbank for water voles once year, usually between April and June.
- ▶ Long term, the programme should improve our understanding of how water voles are faring.

Those trialing the rafts have been surveying at least once a month between May and the end of October this year, and Sabin will get feedback from them once the season has ended. She says she wants to find out how they got on, whether there were any particular issues and if rafts break or go missing.

With water voles still absent, or found in very low numbers, in many parts of the country after steep declines at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of this, finding out how they're faring and whether they're starting to recolonise any new areas is as important as it's ever been. Latrine rafts could prove an important new tool for doing this. ●



Great expectations for giant otter project



PTES Conservation Partner **Dr Adi Barocas** reflects on the achievements of his giant otter conservation work in Peru's Manu National Park over the past five years.

It all started at Lake Salvador in Manu National Park in 2017. With a number of other collaborators, I went out onto this oxbow lake in search of giant otters and found a group of ten almost straight away. And they were doing what these charismatic, aquatic predators do best – swimming, fishing and vocalising.

During that same trip, we visited areas of the Madre de Dios river where gold mining had been taking place for decades. To our surprise, there were otters here and our giant otter programme was born.

Over the years, the focus of our studies has changed – as well as giant otters, we also investigate fish, birds, black caiman, bank trees, other plants and water algae. Our objective is to understand how Amazon freshwater ecosystems are affected by human disturbance and how we can best mitigate for it.

So, what have we found out? Well, over the past five years, we've followed 15

separate giant otter groups and shown that those living in lakes with high fish abundance were able to forage more efficiently and therefore spend less time looking for food.

We've also demonstrated that lakes in areas with gold-mining had less fish, polluted water and degraded bank habitats.

But that's not to say that giant otters

can't live in areas such as old mining ponds and those lakes with lower fish abundance. And, if we put some effort into restoring those areas, then we believe their numbers can rebound.

We've also surveyed bird and plant diversity and abundance, and have set up teams to work

in those local communities that depend economically on gold mining. We teach children in primary schools about how they rely on their environment for food and water.

There's still plenty of work to do. We want to work out how people who live in areas where activities such as gold mining take place can live sustainably, but without it reducing employment opportunities. ●



- ▶ Giant otters *Pteronura brasiliensis* are the longest members of the weasel, or mustelid, family and can grow to a length of 1.7m.
- ▶ They are mainly found in the Amazon and Orinoco Basins and the Pantanal. However an individual was recently spotted in northern Argentina, the first one seen there since the 1980s.

Enhancing our hedges

Our advisory work is bringing about changes in the way hedgerows are managed, with the result that they should provide more food, connectivity and shelter for wildlife.

PTES has advised farmers and landowners managing over 223km of hedgerows, between December 2020 and March 2022, thanks to its *Great British Hedgerow Survey* and the development of the *Healthy Hedgerows* app.

We've been working in collaboration with the **Tree Council** and a number of other groups on hedgerows through the *Close the Gap* and *Trees Call to Action Fund* projects funded by the **National Lottery**.

We've given talks all around the country to raise awareness about the importance of hedgerows and how they can be managed to maximise their benefits for wildlife and broader ecosystem services such as carbon storage.

According to PTES's Hedgerow Officer **Sarah Barnsley**, the talks and the app are helping people see hedgerows in a new light. 'One common piece of feedback is that they didn't realise that hedges should

be managed in synchrony with their life cycle,' Sarah says. This means that the required management intervention differs according to the structure of the hedge and its stage in the life cycle.

'They now understand that hedges aren't just a side habitat in the UK, they're really important,' she continues, 'and if all of our hedges were managed appropriately for



wildlife across the country, they would be a phenomenal resource both for land management and wildlife.'

The *Healthy Hedgerows* app has also been a great success. It enables anyone to input basic details about their hedge, such as structure, average height, thickness and number of trees along the hedge, and get feedback on how they should be managing it. Since its launch two years ago, the app has been downloaded more than 2,000 times and has been used to assess over 800 hedges.

Feedback on talks has been extremely positive. 'I was so inspired by the talk you gave,' said one person. 'I've been a tree warden for over 20 years, and – following on from [climate change] conference COP26 – I want to do more and to really concentrate on hedges.' ●

▶ Find out more www.ptes.org/hedgerows

Where eagles dare



One of South America's rarest birds of prey – the black-and-chestnut eagle – has been found in an Ecuadorian reserve managed by one of our partners.

A bird that has declined to less than 1,000 adult individuals is clearly in serious trouble and needs every bit of help it can get.

That's why PTES is delighted to be supporting the work of **Rainforest Concern** in the Ecuadorian Andes. A recent discovery has revealed that its La Neblina Reserve is home to a pair of black-and-chestnut eagles, an extremely rare and little-studied bird of prey of the tropical Andes.

Last year, Rainforest Concern's principal investigator **Tashkin Meza** discovered the nesting pair of eagles, together with a juvenile, within the reserve. As a result, PTES agreed to fund a two-year research and protection project, which started earlier this year, with the aim of helping the Ecuadorian

Government with its plan to draw up an action plan for the species.

Though the eagle is found from Venezuela in the north to Argentina in the south – a span of several thousand kilometres – its favoured habitat of mature



montane or cloud forests has been disappearing fast, to make way for agricultural land, over the past half century. That's why they are so scarce.

And because they are found in remote areas, they are poorly understood, too. We do know that black-and-chestnut eagles hunt other large arboreal birds and medium-sized mammals such as squirrels, coatimundis and monkeys. They are usually found in dense rainforest between an altitude of 1,500 and 2,800m.

La Neblina is a 2,500 hectare reserve on the western slopes of the Ecuadorian Andes. It is rich in plants such as orchids and other epiphytic flora, plus scarce mammals such as Andean bears, ocelots, pumas and many species of frogs and hummingbirds. ●

Thanks to you

We can't do any of this work without the generous help of individuals, corporate partners and the efforts of our scientists in the field. Your support keeps our conservation efforts growing, so thank you for standing up with us to support wildlife.

Dedicated donations for dormice

Welcome to all the new regular supporters of our dormouse conservation programme.

As you know, we had a very successful dormouse reintroduction into a woodland in Lancashire the end of June (see PTES in Action for more details, p19) with our partners ZSL, Paignton Zoo, Natural England and Back on Our Map. After undergoing their health checks, 39 healthy dormice were placed in their release cages with their nest box, food and water, and plenty of space to roam around.

Dedicated volunteers are vital to this programme, and without them, and donors like you, we wouldn't be able to conduct this important conservation work.

A week after the initial reintroduction, small openings were made in the release cages so the dormice could begin to explore their new woodland home. Throughout the summer, the volunteers slowly reduced the food provided so the dormice learnt to forage on their own.

In July, we checked all 204 boxes and found 10 adult dormice that we released a month earlier, as well as eight unoccupied nests, showing that the dormice have started to make their way into the woods. By August we discovered seven of the released adult dormice, and 17 young from four

different litters.

We're very pleased with what we have seen so far, with evidence of some dormice moving away from the release site and into new areas of the woodland. Thanks to everyone who donated to our dormouse appeal in July – you helped raise a wonderful and very important £32,000. ●



Get spotted! Your trail cams are snapping spotty cats

Thanks to all to donors who have given gifts to help snow leopards in Mongolia, where we've been supporting Bayara Avgaantseren for many years.

Part of this work includes surveying through camera traps to determine snow leopard populations. In a recent survey, the team studied the footage from 43 camera traps set up across 2,185 km² of snow leopard habitat. Cameras were set up by Tost community rangers in areas most suited for snow leopard sightings, such as mountain passes and ridges.

There were a total of 239 unique capture events. Within this set, researchers were able to confirm 21 individual resident adult snow leopards, including eight males and 13 females. Some of the snow leopards detected were Dagina, Anu, One Eye, Tsetsen and The Dude. ●

Find out more ptes.org/conservation-partnership/snow-leopards-project-profile

Made up for native pollinators

Thanks to cosmetics company Barry M for supporting us with the sales of their bee, butterfly and beetle makeup palettes, made specially for PTES.

For every palette sold, Barry M donates 20 per cent of the proceeds to our conservation work protecting the habitats that these species rely on.

Earlier in the year, the palettes featured on ITV's This Morning, within their 'best new beauty launches' segment, and were also named 'Brand of the Month' on Latest in Beauty's Bold Beauty Edit.

Barry M's makeup is completely vegan and cruelty-free. Our bee, butterfly and beetle palettes are part of their WILDLIFE® range, which also helps other species and conservation efforts around the world.

Thanks again for helping some of Britain's most important pollinators. ●



Feline hopeful for wildcats

Thank you everyone who donated to our wildcat appeal earlier this year. We raised a brilliant £34,500.

Excitingly, 18 wildcat kittens were born this season, and they are being monitored from a distance by the keepers at Highland Wildlife Park. They've had their first set of vaccinations to protect them from feline herpes and feline leukaemia, threats they face from domestic cats in the wild. The goal is to release this new generation of wildcats into the Cairngorms National Park next year.



The kittens have a lot of learning to do before they're released. Wildcats typically leave their mothers when they're about six to eight months old, so eventually they'll be transferred to larger enclosures to help them develop key behaviours necessary for life in the wild, including foraging, hunting, social interactions and avoiding humans. None of this work could be done without our loyal supporters, and we're enormously grateful for donors like you. ●



Wild ideas for Christmas

Get your Christmas shopping done this year by scouring the PTES website for some great gifts.

We've got a host of new ideas your nearest and dearest will love and, what's more, every penny you spend goes directly towards our conservation work in the UK and overseas. Discover the brilliant new Beach Clean placemat and coaster sets made from plastics recovered from oceans, or encourage kids to get outside with a flower press (below), seed kit or a nature scavenger hunt.

Or inspire friends and family with a book or guide from our new range to help turn even the smallest outdoor patch into a haven for struggling wildlife with *The Windowsill Gardener* (left), *The Wild Remedy* or *Go Toxic Free*. ●



See the full range ptes.org/shop

Sightseeing for saigas

Thank you to all those who donated to our Saiga appeal in Uzbekistan.

One of the goals of our conservation partnership is to prepare Resurrection Island for sustainable eco-tourism, creating opportunities for local communities and reducing the need for poaching and other actions threatening saiga survival. In August, a training day was organised for representatives from the local area who plan to open guest houses in the Aral Sea region. They learned about ecological tourism, created business plans and exchanged ideas about the role local residents can play in sustainable development.

They then put what they had learned into action, visiting a guest house to take part in practical training. This initiative creates meaningful opportunities for women and young people, and the Saiga Conservation Alliance actively encourages their involvement in this new, nature-positive economy. ●





© Saving Wildcats

A total of 18 kittens have been born at the new Scottish wildcat breeding centre near Aviemore in the Highlands this year as conservationists at NGO Saving Wildcats gear up for the first introductions into the wild in 2023.

PTES supports this programme of captive-breeding that aims to establish a new population in the north of Cairngorms National Park. The goal is to release 20 wildcats a year for at least three years.

Wildcats are still found in Scotland, but habitat loss, persecution and – increasingly – hybridisation with domestic cats has brought them to the brink of extinction. PTES is doing its bit to help Saving Wildcats turn the tide of decline.

Your support is vital.

Thank you.

people's
trust for
endangered
species