

wildlife World

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UK

Dormouse release

The benefits of beavers

Training water vole-unteers

Butterfly man of Briddlesford

Back to the wild

Releasing captive-bred
wildcats is bringing new
hope for the UK's only
remaining native felid

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Dog days

African wild dogs face many threats, but our partner in Kenya is working with local people to secure their future.



The young ones

Giving young ecologists a chance to build a career is vital – we hear from two of our newest interns on the conservation coalface.

The hole truth

The latest on our campaign to persuade DIY retailers and manufacturers to do their bit for hedgehogs by putting gaps in fences.



Bringing the wild back to life

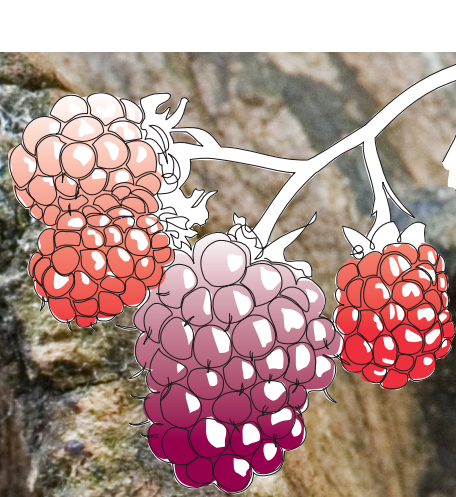
Wildlife World is published by People's Trust for Endangered Species

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

Hazel dormice

Hazel dormouse populations in England and Wales have halved in the past 20 years, and PTES is working hard to improve the management of their woodland homes and make them better connected. Where dormice have disappeared entirely, we've also been closely involved in carrying out reintroductions in partnership with Natural England and other organisations. Since 1993, we've released over 1,000 individuals across 26 sites in 12 counties. We also keep a close eye on how dormice are faring across the country through our National Dormouse Monitoring Programme.



Welcome

In time-honoured fashion, cats and dogs – well, wild dogs and wildcats – fight it out for your attention in this issue. We're proud to be supporting wildcat reintroductions, carried out by the conservation group Saving Wildcats, in the Scottish Highlands ('The hidden claw', p12). The first crop of wildcats were released into the wild in 2023, with kittens born this year at a breeding centre to be released next year and beyond.

Talented and committed people are behind all successful conservation efforts. PTES' internship programme nurtures our future conservationists by providing opportunities to enhance their skills through short research projects with practical outcomes. Recent graduates can hone their expertise in, for example, GIS mapping, data analysis, species identification and surveying – all the skills they need to become the well-rounded conservationists we badly need.

... And finally, it's goodbye.

Sadly, this is the last time I'll welcome you to our magazine. I'm leaving PTES at Christmas after many very happy years. It's been an absolute pleasure working with such committed staff, trustees and conservationists. And a real honour meeting and corresponding with so many of our fabulous supporters. News of my successor will follow soon.

And thanks to all of you, I'm certain PTES will continue to thrive.

Thank you.

JM



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

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- 04 We profile Jim Baldwin, who keeps a weather eye on all things bug-related in our Briddlesford Reserve on the Isle of Wight, in **PTES People**.
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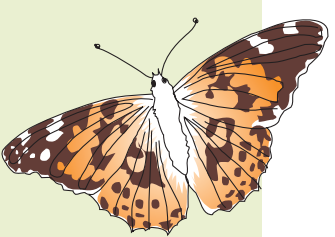


Jim Baldwin has been recording butterflies, moths and dragonflies at PTES' Briddlesford Woods nature reserve on the Isle of Wight since 2017. He tells us what this role involves and why he does it.

I first started when I heard a presentation from the site manager saying they were looking for someone to be the butterfly surveyor. I had limited time back then, but we managed to work something out. The main role is monitoring butterflies – I walk the same 2.5km route every week. It's a transect through the woods and one meadow counting moving butterflies I see 3m either side and 3m above my head. I have to be careful not to double count. It normally takes about an hour and a half and, at the height of the season, I will see 300-400 butterflies, including 80-100 meadow browns. Briddlesford is one of the best sites on the island for white admirals, and is also very good for silver-washed fritillaries and ringlets. I do moth-trapping in the reserve about four times a year at the same location, often staying up until 4am. I get up to 150 moths coming to the trap, and as an ancient woodland, Briddlesford is quite good for some woodland specialists. There's also the dragonfly survey, which I try to do at least monthly. I've previously found a species that's a first for the island, the southern migrant hawk, which is colonising southern Britain from the continent. I've been recording wildlife – originally, just birds – all my life, and it's second nature to me now. I love doing it, and it's great to know I'm making a contribution. All my records are passed to local centres, and they can be used to establish population trends, which is really important. I try to encourage members of the public to get involved as well. ●

Find out more
www.ptes.org/briddlesford

“ I get up to 150 moths coming to the trap and, as an ancient woodland, Briddlesford is quite good for some woodland specialists. ”



Eagles and other wildlife thrive where tourists dare

Species ranging from red squirrels in the Scottish Highlands to mountain gorillas living among the Virunga volcanoes of East Africa can benefit from well-managed tourism.

As I write this in mid-July, I'm starting to think about this year's family summer holiday – a week on the Applecross Peninsula on the west coast of Scotland. We'll take our kids gorge-walking and sea-kayaking, but I also plan to drive over to Shildaidg for a day and see if we can spot some of the woodlands' newest residents – red squirrels. They were reintroduced there in 2016 by the conservation group **Trees for Life**, with some of the funding provided by PTES, of course. Our children are well used to us haring around the country in search of fabulous wildlife – they've had puffins walk between their legs on Skomer off the coast of West Wales and watched white-tailed eagles plucking mackerel off the surface of Loch na Keal on the Isle of Mull in the Inner Hebrides. And, while doing all this, we've been supporting the local economies of these places. We spend money on places to stay, fish and chips, flapjacks, cups of tea and the occasional glass of wine, and we employ local people that offer guiding services or rent out kayaks. Even though we usually drive (we did once take the famous Euston-Fort William sleeper train – it was great fun but ruinously expensive), it's still more sustainable than flying to Malaga or Ayia Napa for a week of dozing by the beach or a pool. Even in the relatively nature-impooverished UK, eco- or nature-tourism can be a source of revenue for many businesses. Here, the best-known example is Mull's white-tailed eagles, which according to the most recent study carried out in 2022, are responsible for people splashing out between £5-8 million a year, of which between £2.1-3.5 million is spent locally. Between 98-160 full-time jobs are supported by the eagles alone. It's a model example of how to let nature pay its way. Tourism is carefully controlled, and there's little evidence of negative impacts on the eagles themselves. According to **Dave Sexton**, the RSPB's

officer on Mull, the only negative side is 'overzealous, irresponsible photographers who want that shot', and disturb eagles in the process, but happily they are few and far between. Mountain gorilla tourism in the Virunga Mountains of Central Africa has also been a tremendous success. Numbers of these gentle giants have risen substantially thanks to the thousands of pounds rich westerners pay to see them, and there's little doubt their populations would be less secure without tourism. If only ecotourism always worked as well as this, but it can have an adverse effect on the wildlife at the centre of attention. Whale-watching, for example, unless very carefully regulated, can disturb animals. It can impact their behaviour and even affect something as vital as their reproductive rates.



Mull's white-tailed eagles, according to the most recent study, are responsible for people splashing out between £5-8 million a year.

In parts of Africa, there are so many safari businesses that there can be more 4x4s surrounding a pride of lions than cars going round Piccadilly Circus at rush hour. That can't be good – for the people who have paid thousands of pounds to be there or the lions themselves. Plus, the extent to which local people benefit from wildlife tourism from Botswana to Bolivia is frequently open to question. Some of the conservationists PTES works with believe that ecotourism can support their projects. Our partners at the **Snow Leopard Conservation Fund** already have a strong ecotourism element to their work, while the **Saiga Conservation Alliance** is planning for a future where they can bring people to the area of Uzbekistan where they work and show them what they do – and hopefully even some saigas. We wish them all success. When nature tourism is run either by, or in close consultation with, conservationists who care about the long-term survival and welfare of the wildlife, it generally has every chance of having a positive impact. ●

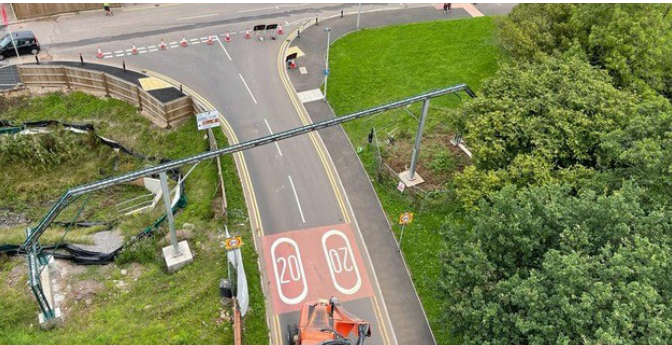


James Fair is a journalist specialising in wildlife conservation stories and editor of *Wildlife World* Magazine.

In this issue's Conservation News, find out how some of our native mammals are being given a boost. Plus news on how PTES is helping to make our conservation partners more effective in the work they do.

Testing out new methods to bridge the gap for dormice

PTES has developed bridges to reconnect woodland fragments – now we want to know if they are used.



In 2015, PTES tested a dormouse bridge design at our reserve on the Isle of Wight and recorded dormice using it after only nine hours. The design was developed into a practical bridge, and bridges have started to be installed at other locations. But even with a design that we know dormice will use, there's still more work to do once they have been installed. Often on a development site, much of the vegetation where dormice have been recorded has been cleared so that the bridge can be put up. The vegetation then has to grow back and the local dormouse population has to reoccupy the newly planted area. Finally, they have to find the bridge. As a result, it could take 5-10 years before a bridge is being used by dormice. We're currently working on a way to monitor bridges over the longer term so we can detect whether they are being used or not. Habitat fragmentation is a serious issue for dormice, and though it can be difficult to remedy, we shouldn't stop trying.

Dormice thriving in new home in Derbyshire's Calke Abbey

In collaboration with the National Trust, PTES has carried out another dormouse release.



A dedicated group of volunteers, vets, captive-breeders and conservationists, led by PTES Dormouse Officer Ian White, released 38 hazel dormice into an ancient woodland on the Calke Abbey estate in Derbyshire this summer. Helped by National Dormouse Monitoring Programme (NDMP) volunteer Lorna Griffiths, the National Trust team checked 200 boxes in July and August to see how the animals were doing. The team found several pregnant females, a litter of pinkies and lots of well-constructed nests. It appears the dormice are settling in well to their new home. Since the National Trust took ownership of Calke in 1985, its team of rangers has been managing the estate and improving the habitat so that it supports a wider diversity of wildlife, including birds of prey, mammals and invertebrates. In preparation for the hazel dormice, the rangers also expanded the woodland, planting 3,000 native tree species and removing non-native larch. They also created new woodland glades and put in fencing to protect hedgerows, enabling them to grow wider and denser.

Eager beavers to the rescue!

While PTES continues to coordinate the National Water Vole Monitoring Programme, news reaches us of help for our beleaguered native rodent from an unexpected quarter – another rodent.



Scientists at the University of Exeter have established that the presence of beavers – native to the UK until they were wiped out some 400 years ago – leads to an increase in water vole signs across a wide area, suggesting water vole numbers are also increasing. In 2016, a pair of beavers was released onto a site in South Devon where the River Otter Beaver Trial was underway. Over a five year period, as the beavers became established, water vole signs on the site increased from nine in 2016 to 101 in 2021 – a more than 1000% increase. The scientists suggest that the way in which beaver activity creates complex wetland environments helps water voles by both providing better habitat and protection from predation.

That's the good news. The bad news is that in England and Wales there are only a few areas where beavers have been released into the wild, though it's hoped this will change in the years to come.

Wildlife sites at risk from waste water from new homes

Ministers have ripped up rules requiring house-builders to offset the impact of nutrients on protected areas.



Wildlife & Countryside Link (WCL) – a coalition of conservation groups of which PTES is a member – is concerned by the Government's decision to allow houses to be built without mitigating for pollution in England's most sensitive wildlife sites. Ministers have decided that developers will no longer have to follow the so-called Nutrient Neutrality rules that protect areas designated under the Habitats Regulations. Previously, house-builders were required to offset the impact of urban waste water from new homes by reducing diffuse nitrate pollution from farmland or creating new wetlands. Developers claimed these rules were holding up the building of 100,000 houses. But as WCL chief executive Richard Benwell pointed out, a pipeline of nutrient reduction projects had been coming on stream, and that will now be lost.

The Government is planning to remove legal protections for nature, throw away requirements for polluters to pay and use taxpayers' money to try to fill the gap, he said.

New initiative to make our funding more effective

Online webinar will now be repeated annually.



Conservation funds are limited and highly competitive, which makes life very challenging for those on the ground trying to protect our threatened wildlife. But it also presents challenges for those of us providing the funds to carry out this critical work. Where

should we channel the money? How can we maximise the impact of our funds to make every penny count? Sharing information and learning from others is a trait that all humans share. But sharing conservation evidence based on robustly gathered data by other scientists is still not commonplace. PTES has partnered with University of Cambridge as an Evidence Partner in a new initiative to help our project leaders – in the UK and overseas – collect robust evidence. Two online webinars have been held for conservationists working in Uganda, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Burundi and Iraq. Some 30 delegates questioned our trainers on how to plan their conservation work more effectively and where to share their findings so others could learn from their experiences too. Following this great start, these webinars will be held annually.

Connecting conservationists

Online platform allows our partners to network with others working on similar species. It should help them increase the impact of the work they do and make our money go further.



PTES has joined an exciting new initiative called Conservation Connect. It's an online platform to develop a nature conservation sector where local conservation teams have access to resources, funds and a wide-reaching network so they can maximise impact. Established by our partners – the Prince Bernhard Nature Fund based in the Netherlands and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund in Abu Dhabi – the platform is created and run by grant-giving organisations such as PTES. The project teams we support are given exposure so that other funders can see the good work they're doing.

Conservation Connect also offers the chance to connect and network with like-minded people or those working on the same species. Sarah Fraser from Rainforest Concern – whose team in Ecuador we're funding to protect black-and-chestnut eagles (pictured above and more on p18) – has already connected with another team in South America working on the same, elusive species. We are delighted it's already paying dividends.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:

Water vole drawing class, 14th November 2023, 7 – 8.30pm

Hosted by our partners at Wild Life Drawing, via Zoom. Tickets £12 + small booking fee. 50% of proceeds donated to PTES.

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

Find out more www.ptes.org/events



Africa's wild dogs on the comeback trail

African wild dogs are one of the continent's rarest predators, more threatened than lions, leopards or cheetahs. They're found over a wide area of Africa, from semi-desert areas of Burkina Faso and Senegal in the north to the savannahs of Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia in the south, but usually in very low numbers. Though the population is given as around 7,000 individuals, the IUCN Red List says there are just an estimated 1,400 mature individuals, with the majority living in what's known as the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area that spans Botswana, Zambia and other countries.

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Return to Kenya



The rise, fall and partial rise again of a population of African wild dogs in Kenya is typical of the issues facing the species across much of the continent.

In East Africa, populations are fragmented and numbers are low. After an absence of 30 years, the species recolonised Kenya's Ewaso ecosystem – an area in the centre of the country mainly centred on the Laikipia and Samburu districts north of Mount Kenya – in 2003. But it was almost wiped out in 2017 by an outbreak of Canine Distemper Virus (CDV). Since then, the wild dogs are surviving, but threats remain.

Reducing conflict

Our partner, **Dedan Ngatia**, is trying to learn more about what exactly these threats are and how they can be eliminated, or at least reduced. Dedan is investigating how wild dogs interact with both domestic dogs and cattle by putting GPS collars on all three in a number of ranches in the area. He believes the presence of domestic dogs helps to reduce the predation of livestock by wild dogs, and he hopes his data will show this. If that's the case, then we'll understand better how to reduce conflict between herders and wildlife and help local communities become more accepting of the presence of wild dogs.

Vaccination drive

But it's also the case that domestic dogs pass diseases to wild dogs, so Dedan is working with local groups to make sure as many domestic dogs are vaccinated as is possible. Finally, it's believed hot, dry weather brings people – and their dogs – into closer contact with wildlife, including the wild dogs. With climate change, this issue may only increase. But the more data we have, the more scientists such as Dedan are able to formulate solutions to combat these types of problems. ●

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!



Blooming success

Orchard Blossom Day was celebrated this year at around 60 sites across Britain, including several National Trust properties. Across Europe, Orchard Day was celebrated at a total of 150 sites.

Find out more <https://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk>



Ellie Baggett from Wye Valley AONB used pheromone traps to capture two lovely female noble chafer beetles

My role at PTES

Kate Freegard
Data and Mapping Officer



I'm in charge of organising all the wildlife sightings our supporters send us. These include all the records from our Great Stag Hunt, National Water Vole Monitoring Programme, Living with Mammals and Big Hedgehog Map, plus our dormouse sightings and monitoring data. It's exciting to be a part of these important long-term datasets. They allow us to track how our vulnerable species are doing and focus our conservation efforts. I make sure all the information is consistent and accurate, then upload datasets to the **National Biodiversity Network** (NBN) online database, which makes it freely available to anyone to use for their own projects and research.

The records we receive all include a spatial element. This means each one includes coordinates, or a grid reference, that tell us where the species has been sighted and allow us to create maps. This is important as it helps us see where species are doing well, where they aren't and how their distribution is changing. This is my favourite part of the job, because it's fun to see where wildlife is being seen across the country. It allows me to be creative in designing maps that present the data in a clear and colourful way.

Other parts of my role include supporting our orchard volunteers, creating maps for colleagues' presentations and conferences and verifying the images sent in by our citizen scientists – cuter for our dormouse survey than our stag hunt! It's great to have such a varied role that interacts with so many of the different conservation projects we're running. I also have the opportunity to join in with field work at our reserves, like helping with our hedgehog monitoring project earlier this month – I love being able to get out into nature and it reminds me of the wildlife and ecosystems we're helping hidden behind the datapoints on the screen!



Kate at Bridesford Woods, collecting camera traps set to take photos of hedgehogs



Baldwin's bugs

Jim Baldwin, our regular butterfly and moth surveyor (and PTES Person, p4), carried out a moth survey in Bridesford Woods on the Isle of Wight during the summer, with an amazing final count of 237 moths and 62 species.

Pictured (above right) is a double kidney moth – you can see what inspired its name.

Hazel Makepeace, from the Isle of Wight Bat Group, joined Jim for the evening. She recorded several species of bat, including a long-eared bat. They also spotted two male glow-worms, two cream-spot ladybirds (above), a red-legged shieldbug (right) and brown chafer beetles.

Read more about Bridesford Woods ptes.org/briddlesford



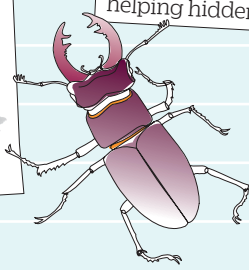
Dear PTES,
I thought you'd like to hear that Mi Diario, a daily newspaper published in Panama, recently published an article about Vicente's frogs. PTES support has been helping our team gather critical data about this little amphibian.

The story featured alongside a stunning photograph of the tiny creature, and a mention of PTES' support for the work – a first for us and the frogs!

Dr Eric Flores



Vicente's frogs only measure between 2.5 and 3.5 cm!



Stag beetle party

We've seen some pretty amazing stag beetle log piles, but this one must be the biggest! The **Greenways Project** volunteers worked alongside **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** young members, the **Friends of Belstead Brook Park** and other volunteers to dig out the shape and place over 25 tonnes of logs. They celebrated their creation in Kiln Meadow, Ipswich this June with a big stag beetle party. There were even stag beetle themed cakes to mark the occasion. Well done to **James Baker** and his team for creating such a wonderful habitat to help stag beetles and other insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds and small mammals.



At more than 15 metres long, the 'pile' is large enough to be visible from satellite maps



Planting hedgerows

After a year-long tenure at the Food Museum in Suffolk, the **Hedgerows** exhibition (which PTES contributed to) is now an award winner. Not only did it inspire thousands of visitors, but it also won the National Lottery's Heritage Fund's Sustainable Project of the Year. **Hedgerows** portrayed the beauty and vital importance of our hedgerows as a semi-natural habitat and how they enable the wider natural environment to thrive.

Hedgerows was also taken to Parliament by the countryside charity CPRE to engage ministers in the group's impressive campaign to plant and manage 45,000 miles of hedgerow by 2050. This is now written into law, a proud and optimistic legacy.



Dorset Wildlife Trust shared with us this unusual sighting in Gillingham – a leucistic water vole. We've never seen anything like it before!



The *hidden* claw

When a report concluded in 2019 that Britain's only remaining native felid – the wildcat – was on the verge of extinction, conservationists had to quickly devise a new conservation approach. Four years later, the fruits of that radical action plan took their first tentative steps into the wilds of the Cairngorms in north-east Scotland.

Some species, when reintroduced, quickly make themselves extremely visible. You can't, for example, walk along a river where beavers have been released and not notice signs of their presence such as fallen trees and gnawed and chiseled stumps. But you'd do well to catch sight of the animals themselves. White-tailed eagles, which have thrived since being brought back to Scotland's west coast in the 1970s and 80s, are now regularly seen on islands such as Mull in the Inner Hebrides.

Others are more secretive, with the wildcat being perhaps the prime example, the ultimate mystery beast – Macavity in nature if not name, TS Eliot's the hidden paw. You're almost as likely to catch a glimpse of the Loch Ness Monster than this famously elusive hunter.

So – somewhat sadly – just because 22 captive-bred wildcats were released into undisclosed locations in a northern part of the Cairngorms National Park in June doesn't mean you're likely to see any. It's a large area covering some 600km², an area one and a half times the size of the Isle of Wight, and covering locations such as the RSPB's Loch Garten Reserve, Abernethy

Forest and the Glenmore, Rothiemurchus and Glen Feshie estates.

In fact, **Saving Wildcats** – the partnership behind the releases – doesn't really want you to try. 'If someone manages to see one, then good luck to them, but we don't want to encourage it,' says project leader and head of conservation at the **Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS)** Helen Senn. 'We are trying to do everything we can to minimise disturbance.'

Saving Wildcats, which has been breeding the animals at the RZSS's Highland Wildlife Park over recent years, hopes these newly released cats can become established over the next decade or so. More releases will take place in the following years, with the expectation that the area can eventually support a self-sustaining population of some 40 individuals.

Supported by organisations that include PTES, the Scottish Government's wildlife advisor **NatureScot**, the **Cairngorms National Park Authority** and the RZSS, Saving Wildcats has been meticulous in preparing the ground for the

cont'd over ►

Scottish wildcats live in a variety of habitats from forest to mixed scrub and grassland. They feed on small rodents, rabbits and, less often, birds, and it's thought they will also feed on carrion when live prey is harder to find during, for example, a cold winter. Numbers in Scotland have crashed to critically low levels following years of habitat loss, persecution and – more recently – hybridisation with domestic cats.

Other wild cats of the world

The IUCN Red List recognises five other cats in the *Felis* genus – that doesn't include *Felis catus*, the almost universal house cat, which was domesticated from *F. lybica*.

Afro-Asiatic wildcat
Felis lybica

- ▶ Least concern
- ▶ Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and parts of India and Pakistan
- ▶ A wide variety of habitats
- ▶ 3.9-5.1kg



Black-footed cat *Felis nigripes*

- ▶ Vulnerable
- ▶ Botswana, Namibia and South Africa
- ▶ Dry open savannah and Karoo semi-desert
- ▶ 1.3-1.93kg



Sand cat *Felis margarita*

- ▶ Least concern (but population trend unknown)
- ▶ North Africa, Middle East, Iran and Central Asia
- ▶ Sandy desert
- ▶ 1.8-2.4kg



Chinese mountain cat *Felis bieti*

- ▶ Vulnerable
- ▶ Qinghai-Tibet Plateau of central China
- ▶ Mountain areas between 2,500-5,000m
- ▶ 6.5-9kg



Jungle cat *Felis chaus*

- ▶ Least concern
- ▶ Mainly India, Myanmar, and Thailand, but also Iran, Iraq, Central Asia and even Turkey to northern Israel
- ▶ Wetlands with dense cover
- ▶ 5-9kg



emergence of these new arrivals. In particular, it was essential to make sure that local communities supported the programme and that domestic and feral cats in the release area were neutered.

Breeding at the wildlife park has taken place away from the public gaze so that none of the released cats are habituated to people. Now that they've been released, Saving Wildcats is focused on monitoring how they are faring. All have been fitted with GPS-enabled collars that should give the team a good idea of where they go and – in time – what they're doing.

'We'll be concentrating first of all on whether they've established territories and are managing to feed themselves,' Helen says. 'Are the cats surviving in the wild as wildcats?'

Almost any wildlife reintroduction is tricky, but carnivore ones are particularly challenging. Mortality rates can be high. Finding and, above all, catching enough prey is generally a harder thing to do than grazing or browsing on vegetation. Helen hasn't ruled out providing supplementary food should any individuals struggle, and they will keep a very close eye on them during the winter months, especially if and when temperatures drop very low.

Wildcats are known to occasionally feed on carrion such as deer carcasses – usually freshly dead ones. Given that deer

management is carried out across the Cairngorms area as part of an ecological restoration programme, it could simply be a case of leaving some carcasses in areas used by the cats. 'To what extent carrion is important in their diet and their survival, we are not sure, but we've got to be very open in our approach,' Helen says.

Another issue for the wildcats will be road traffic mortality. With few individuals to play with, how this impacts them will be closely monitored. Putting in mitigation in the form of wildlife underpasses or bridges hasn't been ruled out.

But let's rewind a bit. What has happened to wildcats to leave them relying on reintroductions for survival? The first thing to say is that they've been declining in the UK over many centuries, with the loss of woodland throughout Britain being probably the biggest factor. They disappeared from England and Wales in the 19th century, leaving those in Scotland hanging on as a small, relict population.

The 20th century brought precious little relief for our remaining wildcats, with ongoing persecution from gamekeepers adding to the pressure. Then in the 1990s, a new threat became apparent – native wildcats were interbreeding with feral domestic cats, producing fertile young that often looked a lot like genuine wildcats, but with some differences.

In response, it was necessary to devise a test, based on the their markings, for assessing whether cats seen in the wild were true wildcats or hybrids and to trap, neuter, vaccinate and release (called TNVR) any animals that were assessed as being the latter. But though a TNVR programme was put in place, it made little progress in reversing the wildcat's fortunes.

As a result, a report published in 2019 concluded there were as few as 30 pure wildcats left in Scotland and that hybrid animals were a major obstacle to the recovery of the species.

It was this report that compelled conservationists in Scotland to conclude a completely new approach was required – hence the captive-breeding and release programme.

Despite the dire straits the species finds itself in, this attempt to save it from extinction here in Great Britain (in contrast, it is doing fine in many parts of mainland Europe and western Asia) at least comes at a time when some landowners are beginning to understand the need to restore nature, both for its own sake and ours. In particular, a group of landowners collaborating under the banner of Cairngorms Connect is attempting to reverse wildlife declines over a broad, landscape-scale.

'The long-term restoration of wildcats is going to need large, interconnected



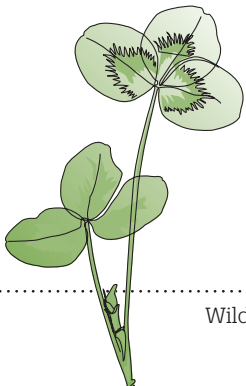
ABOVE: Restoration of biodiversity in the Cairngorms National Park has involved a widespread tree-planting programme that allows a greater range of wildlife, including mammals, birds and insects, to flourish. It will help wildcats, too – they do well where established woodlands are found alongside clearings and grassland areas – so-called mosaic habitats.

LEFT: Wildcats brought into the Saving Wildcats captive-breeding programme had to be assessed for their levels of hybridisation, and only those deemed to be at least 75 per cent wildcat were allowed in – equivalent to a cat having one domestic cat as one of its grandparents. Saving Wildcats now has some 150 animals in its breeding programme.

landscapes with good habitat,' Helen points out. 'We'd like to see the return of wildcats really driving that conversation. Carnivores are an acid test of habitat quality, and if we give up on them, we are giving up on a vision of healthy, natural ecosystems.'

Over time, it's hoped that the Saving Wildcats project can act as a template for other reintroductions in Britain. Conservationists, for example, in both south-west England and Wales are investigating what it would take to bring wildcats back to those parts of the UK. 'One of the real aims of our project is to provide a really good scientific basis for similar projects,' says Helen.

There's a long way to go before that happens, but with habitat restoration taking place on farmed land right across the country, there's no reason why it shouldn't. If and when it does, then maybe we will have these pioneer Scottish cats, slowly staking their claim to the forests, grasslands and mountains of the Cairngorms, to thank. ●



Leopard nation



Our partner Mohammad Farhadinia runs a Persian leopard conservation project, which involves monitoring, assisting wildlife rangers and raising awareness among local people. Here he tells us about his work.

Tell us about Persian leopards

Persian leopards – the largest of the leopard subspecies – live in a variety of habitats in Iran and adjoining territories, ranging from arid highlands in central parts to the temperate Hyrcanian Forest near the Caspian Sea in the north. Though typically found in high-altitude habitats up to 4,000 meters, they are occasionally spotted at low elevations such as the Caspian sea shoreline. (See also, Fact File, right).

This habitat versatility highlights their remarkable adaptability, which may explain why they have persisted, in contrast to other big cats previously found in the region, the Asiatic lion and Caspian tiger. Both of these became extinct during the first half of the 20th century, but the Persian leopards survived, and are now considered Iran's largest cats.

What do the leopards prey on?

Thanks to their ability to thrive in diverse habitats, Persian leopards share their territory with a wide variety of prey species. Their diet primarily consists of wild sheep, wild goats (known as 'Pazan' in Farsi), wild

boar and Indian crested porcupines, but they are also known to take goitered gazelles, chinkara, roe deer, red deer and Persian onagers (or wild asses). In areas marked by a high level of human-wildlife conflict, leopards are also known to target domestic dogs and livestock, though wild sheep and goats remain their most important food sources.

Where do you find them?

Based on camera trapping conducted from Sarigol, Salouk and Tandoureh National Parks in the north-east of Iran, these protected areas boast the highest densities of leopard populations in the country. Tandoureh, covering 73,435 hectares, is home to at least 37 leopards, Salouk 11 leopards and Sarigol, spanning 7,000 hectares, 12. Golestan National Park is also renowned as one of the primary habitats for Persian leopards, but the exact number found there is unknown. Other areas may also have high leopard densities, but they are not systematically monitored.



LEFT: Camera-traps are one way in which Mohammad and his team monitor Persian leopards – another is the use of GPS collars. **TOP:** The majority of Persian leopards are today found in the north-east of Iran, with smaller numbers in Afghanistan and the Caucasus.



Fact File

NAME
Persian leopard *Panthera pardus tulliana*.

LOCATION
Persian leopards were once found from southern Anatolia in Turkey and the eastern edge of the Black Sea right across to Pakistan, Kazakhstan and north-west India. Today, they're restricted to the Iranian highlands, with some sporadic populations in mountainous areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Caucasus and the Kurdish areas of Iraq and Turkey (also known as Anatolia).

POPULATION
The most recent estimate for numbers is between 871 and 1,290 individual leopards, with the majority inhabiting Iran, where numbers are put at 550-850. The second largest population is thought to be in Afghanistan, which may have 80-200 leopards, but after many years of political instability, there's no conservation programme in the country.

APPEARANCE
Persian leopards can vary considerably, with both light and dark-coloured individuals being found. A young male leopard from Golestan National Park recently weighed in at 64kg, which is at the upper end of the range for the species – leopards typically weigh somewhere between 30 and 70kg.

THREATS
The primary threats to Persian leopards in Iran are habitat loss and degradation, poaching and conflict with livestock. Drought is increasingly affecting their prey base, too. An analysis of leopard mortality between 2000 and 2015 found that, of 147 leopards, 60 per cent were killed by poachers with poisonous bait or were shot, and 26 per cent were hit by vehicles. A recent study found that between 2012 and 2020, leopards were responsible for 30 attacks on humans and one death – the attacks were believed to be 'defensive reactions' towards adult men who were herding livestock.

What conservation work are you carrying out?

The research component involves scat sampling, camera trapping, capture-recapture and the use of GPS collars to help us better understand the overall population and the leopards' ecology. Using these techniques and technologies, we have identified 60 individuals across four protected areas, with 37 of them in Tandoureh National Park.

What about environmental education?

My team on the ground has run workshops for 400 schoolchildren in 18 villages in areas identified (through GPS collar data) as having high levels of conflict around Tandoureh National Park. We've organised visits to Tandoureh, allowing students to see its wildlife for themselves. And we have also arranged workshops for local herders, focusing on enhancing their understanding of wildlife, with a particular focus on the leopards.

Anything else?

We launched an investigation into the possibility of a Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) outbreak among leopards in Tandoureh after telemetry data indicated that some leopards were hunting domestic dogs. In collaboration with the local veterinary authorities, we vaccinated 5,000

domestic dogs, helping to reduce the chances of leopards becoming infected.

Do you work with official conservation authorities?

Yes – for example, we've provided equipment, such as boots, jackets, backpacks, GPS devices and mobile phones, for park rangers. We have also helped to build an access road to a particular area, and we've maintained vehicles for rangers and equipped ranger outposts with solar power to improve communications.

In recent years, drought has become a severe problem in the territories where leopards are found, and we have contributed to the construction and repair of 10 water troughs in the national park.

How can you measure the success of your work?

Human-caused mortality of leopards by local people has been reduced to less than 40 per cent of the pre-project period. Tandoureh is now much better known both locally and nationally, helping to secure more internal resources for conservation.

What are you doing nationally to protect Persian leopards?

With the cooperation of well-known celebrities, we have attracted significant public attention for the leopards. A meeting that the field team organised

with officials in Dereh Gaz County (where Tandoureh is located) was vital in persuading local authorities to collaborate with us on conservation measures.

Subsequently, a documentary called *Operation Leopard* was produced and broadcast on national TV, and we believe this has helped to increase awareness and understanding of the leopards among Dereh Gaz residents.

What are your future plans?

We want to further enhance public awareness and understanding of Persian leopards and continue to mitigate the detrimental impacts of climate change and drought by making sure both leopards and their prey have access to sustainable water sources. We'd also like to develop ecotourism that will help to give local people in the region an environmentally friendly and sustainable income.

A nationwide programme, known as 'Leopard Guards', aims to employ and train trusted shepherds and hunters to prevent the hunting of leopards and their prey in areas where the Government is unable to fund a team of rangers. And we will also continue to promote leopard conservation at a national level, through meetings, content creation on social media and broadcasting on national television.

I hope all these measures will secure the survival of Persian leopards into the 21st century and beyond. ●

The eagles have landed

Black-and-chestnut eagles have found their way into an Andean reserve in Ecuador that PTES provides funding for – and now we're looking for ways to keep them there.

One of the world's rarest raptors is breeding in an Ecuadorian cloud forest reserve supported by PTES.

The team at the Neblina Reserve on the western side of the Andes in Central Ecuador has found three active nests of black-and-chestnut eagles, one within the reserve itself, the other two just outside.

In April this year, forest guard **Milton Arcos** hiked into the reserve and recorded the presence of a single chick (pictured below) and evidence of one of the adults bringing food to the nest.

In addition, says **Sarah Fraser**, of **Rainforest Concern** – a UK-based conservation NGO which owns and manages Neblina – reserve staff have observed adult eagles in four parts of the region and two juveniles flourishing as they gain greater independence.

Neblina staff are liaising closely with local communities to attempt to reduce conflict between people and the eagles.

Loss of forest habitat can lead to them targeting poultry, and even small dogs as prey. 'Our research suggests that juvenile eagles, in particular, come to smallholdings,' Sarah adds.

Rainforest Concern's biologist **Tashkin Meza** (pictured below, looking for eagles) and forest guard Milton are talking to local community members to find out more about the problem of conflict with eagles and trying to find solutions.

'Education and socialisation are key in helping to protect the species,' says Tashkin. 'We need communities to get onboard and to become champions for the black-and-chestnut eagle. We hope PTES funding will help us achieve this.'

Population data on black-and-chestnut eagles is scarce, with total numbers estimated to be somewhere between 250 and 1,000 adults. They are only found in montane forest in the Andes, a habitat that is itself under huge pressure from

agriculture, road-building and mining. With a wingspan of up to two metres, it's one of the largest birds of prey in South America.

Neblina Reserve is a legally protected reserve on the western slopes of the Andes in Ecuador, and home to other threatened species such as the Andean, or spectacled, bear and the stunning Andean cock-of-the-rock (below). ●



- ▶ The black-and-chestnut eagle is part of the *Spizaetus* genus that includes three other hawk-eagles found in Central and South America.
- ▶ As their name suggests, adults are mainly black with chestnut on their undersides. Juveniles are very different, being mainly white or white-ish and grey-brown on the back.
- ▶ They're found from western Venezuela throughout the Andes to northern Argentina, but sporadically and in very low densities.

Solving a jumbo problem

Our partner in West Bengal is implementing measures to stop elephants from a large wildlife reserve from coming into villages and raiding food stores.

In many parts of Africa and Asia where elephants live, they come into conflict with people. The world's biggest land mammals are lured into areas of human settlement by fields of crops that provide a nutritious smorgasbord for them to feed on.

This is a particularly big issue in the area around the Mayurjharna Elephant Reserve in West Bengal. There are an estimated 100 elephants in the 400km² reserve (with a 1,400km² buffer zone), but numbers have increased by 90 per cent in recent years with tragic results for the local community.

For example, between 2013 and 2014, 37 people were killed in conflict incidents with elephants, with a further 57 people injured and the loss of 4,000 hectares of crops and 1,000 huts. Elephants are killed too, often from electrocution, a deliberate ploy meant to act as a deterrent.

We are funding our partner, **Samya Basu** and his team, to come up with

solutions to the issue. Their plan is to map the elephants' migration routes and where the key populations are to produce maps of where they overlap with humans.

The problem got noticeably worse during lockdowns imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. With fewer people about, lone male elephants were able to come into villages both day and night, damaging homes and crop storage facilities.

Five elephants were killed to retaliate against crop raiding, including one which was poached for its ivory – the first known case in the region.

Other solutions Samya is working on are making villages more elephant-friendly by installing modern alarm systems to give villagers early warning of them being about and underground granaries to stop them accessing stored food. It's hoped these will replace the use of harmful deterrents such as electricity, crackers and fire. ●



Making waves

To reverse water vole declines, we need to know how they are faring – that's why we've set up an ambitious training programme to recruit more voluntary surveyors.

This spring, PTES Water Vole Officer **Emily Sabin** launched our first water vole surveyor training course to recruit more citizen scientists. Emily trained more than 350 volunteers across Britain to take part in our National Water Vole Monitoring Programme (NWVMP). With this new intake of surveyors, the NWVMP is making waves in mapping the whereabouts of water voles.

The training includes survey techniques, ecology, habitat and the dietary preferences of water voles. Water voles are herbivorous, leaving small piles of odourless tic-tac shaped droppings near their burrows. And, as some of the people who attended the courses were astonished to learn, water voles have evolved to eat plants that are highly toxic to humans.

This was witnessed on a training day for **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust** on the River Avon, where a water vole was seen collecting stems of hemlock water-dropwort, one of

the most poisonous plants in Europe. It's a fascinating example of how this species has developed unique physiologies that allow it to exploit resources that are unavailable or dangerous to other animals.

Another distinction is that, apart from beavers, they are the only semi-aquatic rodent in Britain.

The training day equipped volunteers with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective water vole surveyors, and this will help us better understand how populations are faring.

It's a great feeling when the volunteers say they feel confident to survey for water voles after

the training,' Emily says. 'They can also send photos of their finds so I can validate them.'

Jamie Smith, the warden at **RSPB Rainham Marshes**, is complimentary of the training. 'It was amazingly informative, and the practical survey demonstrated well what Emily had taught the group,' he says. 'We hope we can do it again next year.' ●

RIGHT: Learning to spot the tell-tale signs of water voles.

BELOW: Lying down on the job!



Put a hole in it

Do your bit for wildlife conservation by requesting that fence panel manufacturers and retailers make space for hedgehogs in their product range.

Members of the public are being urged to take part in a campaign asking garden fencing manufacturers and suppliers to make their products more hedgehog-friendly.

Hedgehog Street – the joint initiative of PTES and **The British Hedgehog Preservation Society** (BHPS) – is asking people to send letters to national DIY retailers and fencing suppliers to put gaps or holes in their products that allow hedgehogs to pass through them and wander freely between gardens.

The Hedgehog Street website provides a special letter template to download, as well as email addresses for well-known brands such as B&Q, Homebase, Travis Perkins and ScrewFix. Local companies are also important, and hedgehog lovers are being encouraged to approach them, too.

Placing gaps roughly 13cm square in fences helps to create so-called 'Hedgehog Highways' that allow hedgehogs to roam over much wider areas. This has been shown to be vital for their long-term conservation – research has shown they can travel up to 2km in one night looking for food, shelter and potential mates.

Hedgehog Officer **Grace Johnson** says populations of Britain's favourite mammal have declined by as much as 75 per cent in some parts of the countryside. 'Making a Hedgehog Highway is an incredibly simple yet effective solution, especially if manufacturers and suppliers offer ready-made products as standard, and make customers and installers aware of them,' she adds.

Some suppliers are already including hedgehog-friendly fence panels in their

product range – these include Jacksons Fencing, Birkdale and Selco Builders Warehouse. Selco has introduced 'Supreme Pro Hedgehog Hole Gravel Boards' across its 75 stores and online.

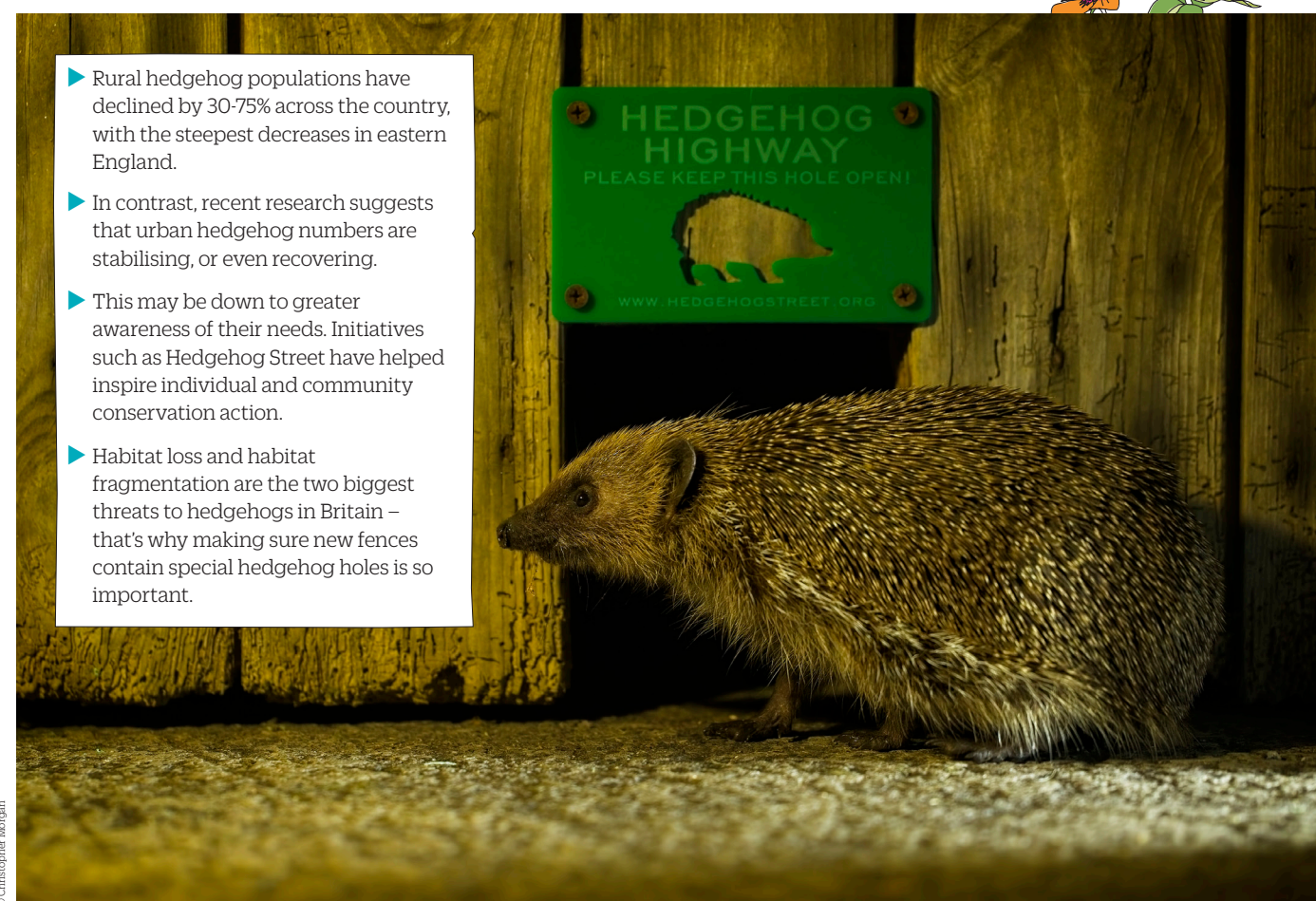
Jacksons Fencing has created a 'Hedgehog Gravel Board' for use with slotted posts. It sits underneath a standard fencing panel, but it has a hole at one end that is large enough for hedgehogs to pass through.

And Birkdale has also created a gravel board that has a suitable gap for hedgehogs and donates 50p to Hedgehog Street for every one it sells. ●

Get involved
www.hedgehogstreet.org/hedgehog-friendly-fencing/



HEDGEHOG STREET
CITY OF WILDLIFE



- ▶ Rural hedgehog populations have declined by 30-75% across the country, with the steepest decreases in eastern England.
- ▶ In contrast, recent research suggests that urban hedgehog numbers are stabilising, or even recovering.
- ▶ This may be down to greater awareness of their needs. Initiatives such as Hedgehog Street have helped inspire individual and community conservation action.
- ▶ Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation are the two biggest threats to hedgehogs in Britain – that's why making sure new fences contain special hedgehog holes is so important.

© Christopher Morgan

Conservation interns

PTES is proud to support young conservationists at the start of their careers to carry out new research or work on conservation projects. Here we profile two of our current interns.

Chough justice

Jess Stevens is researching the movements of reintroduced red-billed choughs on coastal chalk grasslands around Dover.



Red-billed choughs – members of the corvid or crow family – were reintroduced to the cliffs at Dover in the summer of 2023. Jess Stevens is part of a team from **Kent Wildlife Trust** and the **Wildwood Trust** monitoring the newly released birds to check on their progress.

Choughs inhabit coastal grasslands. For them to thrive, it's essential that land is grazed, and that livestock owners don't remove animal dung and halt, or at least reduce, the use of insecticides. Choughs survive on insects such as dung beetles which require animal dung to feed, as well as larvae such as leatherjackets.

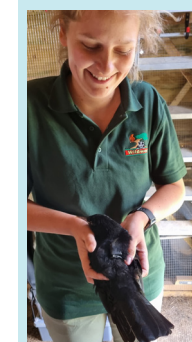
Special tags allow the team to track the birds, identify where they roost for the night and record bird speeds and movements which can give insights into the birds' behaviour.

'My PTES project uses biotelemetry to quantify movement patterns and flight behaviour in non-breeding choughs. This means I can work out what habitat they're using, investigate their feeding behaviour and decide whether we need to give the reintroduced birds supplementary feed,' Jess says.

The long-term aim is to re-establish a self-sustaining chough population in Kent to act as a driving force for wider chalk grassland restoration. ●



© Brian / Shutterstock.com



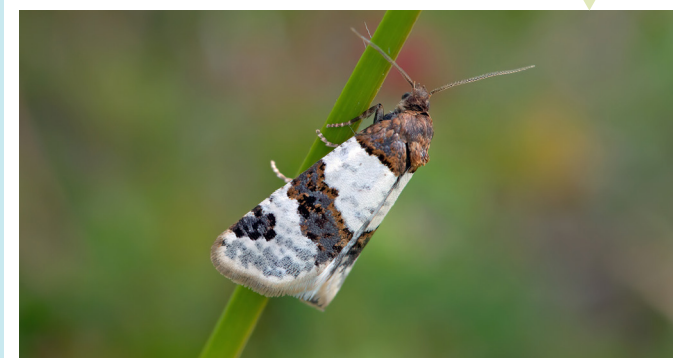
ABOVE: Red-billed choughs used to be found on much of the coastline of the British Isles, but today they are restricted to the west coasts of Ireland and Wales and Cornwall. They form lifelong, monogamous pairs with their mates.

LEFT: Jess Stevens is tracking choughs, that have been reintroduced to grasslands close to Dover in East Kent, using biotelemetry tags. The project, which is a partnership between Kent Wildlife Trust, the Wildwood Trust and Paradise Park Cornwall, hopes to establish a self-sustaining chough population.



LEFT: Anna Aitken is studying the Tiree twist and two other species of micro-moth as part of her PTES internship.

BELOW: The Tiree twist has had mixed fortunes over the past half century or so. Originally found only in Kent (where it hasn't been seen since the 1950s), it was spotted on Tiree in 1984, disappeared in 2007 before reappearing again in 2019.



© Nigel Voaden

Moth monitor

Anna Aitken has taken on the tricky task of studying micro-moths, tiny insects with body lengths of usually less than 1cm.



Micro-moths are a group of very small moths. In the UK, our smallest micro-moth has a body length of just 1.5mm, about a quarter of the length of a grain of rice.

Our intern, Anna Aitken, is studying three species of micro-moth that have an extremely limited range in Scotland and the rest of Britain. The Tiree twist is only known from the Inner Hebridean island of Tiree, and even there it appears to be mainly confined to one small site. The Affric twitcher and currant shoot borer are both very rare, too.

Anna has been searching for caterpillars of the Tiree twist in the hope of rearing them into adults to discover more about their lifecycle. She has also been recording details of the flora, slope and aspect of their habitat on Balephetrish Hill.

For the Affric twitcher and currant shoot borer, Anna is investigating new ways to survey them.

'At this stage, it's hard to estimate their abundance because they are confined to such small areas and there's a lot we don't know about their lifecycles,' she says. 'It may be they have larger populations than we think and are hard to detect or it could be they're precariously close to extinction.' ●

Thanks to you

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

'House a dormouse' appeal hits the spot to fund more releases

Amazing support for dormouse campaign means future releases and vital monitoring can continue.

We had such a positive response to our appeal to fund our dormouse reintroduction and other long-term conservation work. We raised more than £48,000, which is fantastic. With an eye to the future, we ran two parallel appeals, one by post and email and the other – called 'House a Dormouse' – through social media to reach new supporters. We're delighted with the results and welcome all our new regular givers to these pages. The money raised will help us continue to run the annual dormouse releases, the monitoring programme and all our other efforts to save this species from extinction in Britain. Thanks to you all, there are now more dormice in the British countryside. It's great to have you standing up for nature with us. ●



Piling up support for stag beetles

You don't just support us with donations – you also create new habitat for species such as stag beetles.

Every year, thousands of people report their sightings of stag beetles to help us understand where they are thriving and whether their range is expanding or diminishing. Many of you kindly donated to support this work which enabled us to launch our campaign to create suitable habitat for stag beetles in gardens and green spaces. Our *How to build a log pile* guide shows how to make simple log piles and leave suitable tree stumps.

Since 2021, 2,632 new habitats have been created and added to our log pile map – 1,807 log piles, 443 tree stump areas and 382 log pyramids, all for stag beetles to enjoy. Thank you for all your support for stag beetles.

Find out more
stagbeetles.ptes.org/how-to-build-a-log-pile/

Helping hedgehogs to 'Save Our Wild Isles'

Thank you to everyone who gave to our Crowdfunder campaign back in April to boost our hedgehog conservation work.

All donations to this appeal were matched by Aviva's Save Our Wild Isles fund, inspired by Sir David Attenborough's BBC TV series. Together we raised more than £13,000 to help hedgehogs, another amazing effort. And thank you also to all our new donors who started giving regularly to support our hedgehog work. We have so many exciting hedgehog projects going on at the moment and they're only made possible thanks to you. ●

Find out more
ptes.org/hedgehogs

Coton Orchard in Cambridgeshire is under threat from a proposed busway that would cut through this ancient orchard. The orchard of more than 1,000 fruit trees supports 200 species of invertebrates, while bats regularly use the hedgerow boundaries. The council seems determined to progress its scheme despite there being huge opposition and viable alternatives. More than 20,000 people who care (including many of you – thank you) have already signed the petition to save this important habitat.

Sign the petition
www.change.org/p/save-the-green-corridor-cambourne-to-cambridge-bus-lane-not-busway



Christine Jones shared this image (above) of the brilliant log pile she made and Jane Durban sent us her fab photo of a male stag beetle (left).



In Memory of Val Hanratty and her fantastic lunches

Finding suitable sites for dormouse reintroductions can be challenging, so we were delighted when, in 2009, Val and Derry Hanratty offered us their Warwickshire site, writes PTES Dormouse Officer Ian White.

Windmill Naps officially became a National Dormouse Monitoring Programme (NDMP) site the day we put 200 nest boxes up. Both Derry and Val Hanratty, who had recently bought the woodland, were fully involved from the start. We had a shock following the reintroductions when dormouse numbers seemed to drop dramatically, but Val was always confident that the woodland was suitable for dormice, and so it eventually proved when dormouse numbers recovered.

PTES occasionally supplies boxes to reintroduction sites free of charge to replace those that have been damaged or decayed, but Val always insisted that she pay for them, and gave a generous donation to the charity at the same time.

I've been working on dormice for more than 20 years and visited and checked many NDMP sites, but my lunches have never been so grand or memorable as when I visited Windmill Naps. At every box check, Val laid on a small feast for the dormouse monitors under a gazebo in their wood. There was always so much food that everyone left with a package to eat on their journey home. I always felt larger when I left Windmill Naps than when I arrived.

Thank you Val for your enthusiasm, your generosity and your hospitality. You will be greatly missed. ●



Penguin and puzzle presents

Do your Christmas shopping at PTES this year, and it won't just be your family who are delighted.

Treat wildlife to a gift, as well as your loved ones, this Christmas by shopping with PTES. Buying presents for friends and family benefits endangered species because all profit goes towards our conservation work in the UK and overseas. We've a lot of new gift ideas to choose from, including these crowd-pleasing salt and pepper shakers, and perfect stocking-fillers like a nature-trail set for young explorers including binoculars, insect viewer and magnifying glass. Not to mention our brand new PTES hazel dormice jigsaw which is sure to delight all nature-loving puzzle enthusiasts! ●



Flower-power

In our sadly nature-depleted world, gardens can be refuges for wildlife if you just let them go a bit.



With your help, hundreds of wildlife features have been added to gardens across Britain, from hedgehog highways to leaf piles and mini wildflower meadows – like this one that James Eaton-Brown sent us a photo of. Thanks to all those who supported our campaign and took the first steps to make their gardens more wildlife-friendly. ●

Help for hedgerows

In April, we participated in The Big Give's Green Match Fund to raise money for one of our most important habitats.

Often overlooked, hedgerows provide food and shelter for thousands of species and are vital to maintaining our biodiversity. Thanks to generous match funding from our partner, O'Mara Books, supporters' donations went twice as far. We raised more than £5,000 from both new and existing supporters, and we reached our target in less than 48 hours. ●





© Black Horse/Shutterstock.com

Small Indian civets are found in Cipaganti village on the island of Java in Indonesia where our slow loris project is based. Civets – known locally as luwaks – are important seed dispersers, which comes in handy because the **Little Fireface Project** team – led by our Conservation Partner **Anna Nekaris** – is working to help local farmers increase their organic coffee output.

In order to learn more about the civets' role in spreading coffee seeds, Anna's team plans to catch and radio-collar several individuals so they can follow them and learn more about their behaviour. But even though they are spotted frequently in the village, they are proving tricky to trap! We hope to bring you good news about this project in future issues of *Wildlife World*.

Your support is vital.

Thank you.

people's
trust for
endangered
species