



# Action

THE MAGAZINE FOR WWF MEMBERS

SUMMER 2023



## SKIN AND BONES

Tackling the illegal trade in tigers

### THE BENEFITS OF BEAVERS

How these ecosystem engineers are helping us to restore natural landscapes in Norfolk

### SAVE OUR WILD ISLES

Discover a new fund that's helping UK communities take action for nature



# “YOU CAN BE THE GENERATION TO PASS THESE WILD ISLES ON IN BETTER SHAPE THAN YOU INHERITED THEM”

SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH



## TOGETHER, WE CAN SAVE OUR WILD ISLES

The UK's wildlife is amazing – but it's in crisis. We've lost so much. The UK is in the bottom 10% of countries globally when it comes to the abundance of nature. In the past 50 years, 38 million birds have vanished from our skies, and a quarter of our mammals are at risk of extinction. Time has almost run out, but we have just enough nature left to help it recover. We know what we need to do – and everyone has a part to play.

We're working with the RSPB and the National Trust to demand that UK leaders implement a crisis-response plan to halt the destruction of nature and speed up its recovery, and that businesses put nature at the heart of every boardroom decision.

But it's not just up to them. We must all act now for nature: making space and helping it in our everyday lives, and being its voice. If enough of us

demonstrate a love for nature that's impossible to ignore, leaders will listen and act.

When nature thrives, so do we – our health, our wellbeing, our economy. A healthy natural world means a better future for all of us. Love nature and act now to help Save Our Wild Isles.

Visit [saveourwildisles.org.uk](http://saveourwildisles.org.uk) to find out how you can do more for nature.

The *Saving Our Wild Isles* documentary is available on BBC iPlayer. The film meets the people working to protect the UK's precious habitats and species, such as curlews

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### MEET THIS ISSUE'S GUEST CONTRIBUTORS



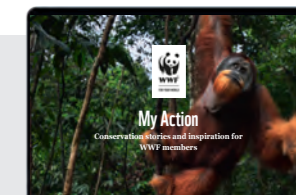
**HEATHER SOHL** is tiger trade lead at WWF Tigers Alive, and has helped shine a light on Asia's 'tiger farms' – tourist attractions that fuel the illegal trade in these big cats and their body parts. "Tigers belong in the wild," she says.



**EMMA MARTIN** is our UK landscapes manager, and has been working to reintroduce beavers to Norfolk, where they're transforming habitats. "Our environment desperately needs help to restore itself," she says.



**URSULA JUTA** is a senior project officer with Norfolk Rivers Trust, and is busy protecting one of our rarest freshwater species. "White-clawed crayfish are vital to the health of the whole aquatic ecosystem," she says.



### VISIT MY ACTION

Explore our brilliant online hub for members where you'll discover...

- The latest news on our work around the world
- Practical tips on how you can make a positive difference
- Videos and galleries of amazing wildlife
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Find all this and more at [www.wwf.org.uk/myaction](http://www.wwf.org.uk/myaction)

**EXTRA!**  
Scan the QR code when you see this logo



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### THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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### YOU HELPED SEAL A DEAL TO STOP NATURE LOSS

With your support, we did it: in December 2022, 196 countries agreed a global deal to halt and reverse the loss of nature by the end of the decade. The agreement was reached at the UN biodiversity summit in Montreal, called COP15. The global deal has been compared to the Paris Agreement on climate change, which has helped accelerate action towards the goal of keeping global warming below 1.5°C.

One of the headline targets is to conserve at least 30% of all land, sea and fresh water in a way that upholds the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities. Countries will also need to take urgent action to stop species extinction and ensure farmland, forests and fisheries are managed sustainably.

Governments have pledged to supercharge funding for conservation, mobilising at least US\$200 billion per year by 2030, while also scrapping some environmentally damaging subsidies.

While a global deal is a big step forward, the challenge now is for countries to translate it into action on the ground for people and nature to thrive. Together, we can make sure our leaders keep their promises! ■

**“NATURE IS OUR BIGGEST ALLY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE. IT’S ALSO THE SOURCE OF OUR HEALTH, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY”**

**TANYA STEELE,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, WWF-UK**

### YOU HELPED CLEAN UP MOUNTAIN GORILLA HABITAT IN RWANDA

Thanks to you, Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda is looking spotless – and that’s good news for endangered mountain gorillas.

With your support, we worked with local community cooperatives to organise a month-long clean-up of the park, home to more than a third of the world’s mountain gorillas. Teams collected rubbish left behind by visitors during gorilla treks, including plastic, discarded food and lost clothing. They also removed invasive plants such as eucalyptus and papaya, which compete with the native vegetation.

Park cleaning isn’t just about being tidy – it also helps prevent the possible transmission of diseases from humans to mountain gorillas. And getting rid of non-native fruit trees reduces the risk of people coming into contact with the gorillas when they enter the park to pick fruit.

Involving the community in this type of work is vital as it raises awareness of conservation and provides a source of income. Conservation is always most successful when local people benefit.

Together, we’ve helped the gorilla population grow to more than 1,000. ■



### YOU HELPED FAMILIES AFFECTED BY DROUGHT IN BOLIVIA

Your support has brought fresh water to Indigenous families in Bolivia, in a region suffering from drought and forest fires. Our colleagues at WWF-Bolivia worked with staff from San Matías Natural Area to install a well and a solar-powered pump to serve the Bahía Negra community, whose territory forms part of this important conservation area.

Around twice the size of Northern Ireland, the San Matías Natural Area encompasses three extraordinary landscapes: the wetlands of the Pantanal, the savannahs of the Cerrado and the Chiquitano tropical dry forest. It’s home to iconic species including jaguars, hyacinth macaws and giant anteaters.

Indigenous communities have helped to conserve the region’s nature for generations. But as climate change intensifies, the region is experiencing less rainfall. And as forests and natural ecosystems are cleared to make way for farms and cattle ranches, wetlands are drying up and erosion is increasing.

On top of this, San Matías has suffered extreme forest fires, including some started deliberately to clear land for farming. Water scarcity threatens people and wildlife, and increases the risk of conflict as communities and wild animals compete for scarce resources. By providing a source of fresh water, you’re helping people and nature to thrive side by side. ■

My Action

### DISCOVER MORE

[www.org.uk/myaction](http://www.org.uk/myaction)

Visit your members-only site to find more successes you’re helping achieve around the world



### YOU HELPED US WORK FOR WILDLIFE IN MALAYSIA

WWF-Malaysia turned 50 in 2022 – and you can be proud of the part you’ve played in the country’s conservation successes over the past half-century. In particular, your support has helped our colleagues protect vital areas of rainforest on the island of Borneo, home to orangutans, Bornean elephants and other amazing wildlife. And now we’re supporting an exciting new project to reconnect two important habitats.

The Mount Wullersdorf Ecological Corridor Project in Sabah, Borneo, aims to restore native forest on around 150 hectares of degraded forest. This will allow wildlife, including orangutans, to move safely between the forest reserves of Mount Wullersdorf and Ulu Kalumpang.

We’re planting fast-growing native trees that provide the right conditions of light and shade for other vegetation to recover naturally. We’re also planting the fruit trees that orangutans love, so there’ll be plenty of food for them in the newly restored areas.

With your support, we’ll be monitoring the project closely to see what actions work best, so that this project can influence other forest restoration efforts in Sabah and beyond. ■

# TOGETHER, WE DID IT!

# WWF IN ACTION

How we're bringing our world back to life



The nature crisis affects all wildlife in the UK, from orcas around our coasts to butterflies in our meadows

## PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR NATURE IS A CALL FOR ACTION

The UK is home to some of the most incredible species on Earth, from puffins to orcas, and beavers to butterflies. But nature is being pushed to the brink and we must act now to save it.

It will take fresh new thinking to solve the nature crisis. This is a big challenge and that's why we all need to come together to share ideas and suggestions for the future of nature in the UK. The People's Plan for Nature is a new strategy to help us protect and restore nature. It's powered by WWF, the RSPB and the National Trust.

During October last year, you shared 30,000 submissions on what nature means to you and what changes need to happen for nature to thrive. These were read and discussed by the People's Assembly for Nature – a randomly selected, demographically representative group of

more than 100 UK citizens. The Assembly came together over four weekends to learn about the crisis facing UK nature. They then discussed the issues and found common ground in order to create the People's Plan for Nature.

At the core of the Plan is the recognition that nature needs to have a voice at the heart of decision-making. It calls for a permanent assembly for nature to hold government – and other organisations – to account on the impacts their actions have on nature. It also demands more responsible leadership. The Plan also stresses the importance of there being no further harm to nature, and for UK-wide and regional targets to be set to renew nature and increase biodiversity.

Among the 26 calls to action are recommendations for more locally managed green spaces that help nature thrive, and a

national conversation on how and why we should change our diets to support nature. The Assembly members recommend that companies involved in food production and retail stop their negative impact on the natural environment.

As the People's Plan for Nature makes clear, we need to change the way we produce our food, reverse nature loss both on land and at sea, and use the power of nature to tackle climate change. We can only do this by seizing the moment and acting together to bring nature back to life. From planting trees to engaging your MPs, we need people across the UK to secure a future for wildlife and help create wild spaces for all.

The People's Plan for Nature has been created by the people, for the people. It calls for immediate action to protect and renew nature. The people have spoken. Now we need everyone to act.

## MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Four ways you can support the People's Plan for Nature on how the UK should respond to the ecological crisis



### ADD YOUR VOICE

Speak up for nature by adding your voice to the People's Plan. Together we can save our wild isles. [peoplesplan.fornature.org](https://peoplesplan.fornature.org)



### SPREAD THE WORD

Let your friends and family know about the Plan. See if your company, school or college can commit to taking action, too.



### TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE

Go wild once a week. For regular tips and inspiration for how you can do this, visit [saveourwildisles.org.uk](https://saveourwildisles.org.uk)



### FIND OUT MORE

Discover the actions you can take to protect UK nature, and what our leaders can do. [peoplesplan.fornature.org](https://peoplesplan.fornature.org)



### MEET THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

Find out what it's like to be part of the call for action as we chat to the team behind the People's Plan for Nature: [myaction.wwf.org.uk/peoples-assembly](https://myaction.wwf.org.uk/peoples-assembly)



## NEWS IN BRIEF



© Heritica Kevin Tony/WWF-Madagascar

### THE BIGGEST HOUR FOR EARTH

On 25 March, millions of people from around the world came together in more than 190 countries for WWF's Earth Hour. Major landmarks took part in the iconic switch-off moment, from the London Eye to the Sydney Opera House. Individuals, communities and businesses were encouraged to give an hour for the Earth – from sustainability forums in China, to planting indigenous trees in Madagascar and collecting waste in the Peruvian Amazon. People from every corner of the globe united to show that they care about the future of our planet.

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

650+



More than 650 shell and tissue samples have been added to ShellBank, the new marine turtle DNA database. Illegal trade in tortoiseshell products is a threat to endangered turtles, but identifying which populations are being targeted is a big challenge. ShellBank will be a game-changer in helping us trace, track and stop turtle poaching and the illegal trade.

320,000

A new conservation initiative in Colombia will safeguard 320,000 sq km of land and sea – an area larger than the whole of the British Isles. Heritage Colombia has secured £200 million of funding over the next 10 years to support the national park system and protect vital areas of habitat in one of the world's most wildlife-rich countries, from the Andes to the Amazon to the Caribbean coast.

NEWS IN BRIEF



© Richard Lilly

RESTORATION FORTH

An exciting marine restoration project is under way in Scotland's Firth of Forth. By the end of next year, Restoration Forth aims to plant at least four hectares of seagrass and introduce 30,000 native oysters. Seagrass meadows and oyster beds improve water quality and support biodiversity by providing feeding, breeding and nursery grounds. They can also absorb and store carbon. By working closely with local communities, we hope to inspire more marine ecosystem restoration projects and influence government policy across Scotland. Our goal is to support the restoration of at least 42 hectares of critical habitat in the Firth of Forth by 2030.



© Literature Wales

LIT IN PLACE

We've teamed up with Literature Wales to launch *Llên mewn Lle* (Lit in Place), which is supporting community groups to explore the climate and nature emergency through literature. Three pilot projects are now up and running. In Gwynedd, the Rhosgadfan school community are combining creative writing with growing their own produce. A woodland therapy group in Treherbert is using storytelling and an illustrated diary to document the connections between nature and mental health. And in Swansea, the LUMIN Syllabus is working with people of colour and low-income communities to explore the links between the climate and nature crises and colonialism.

PORPOISE NUMBERS ON THE RISE

**After decades of decline, the number of critically endangered Yangtze finless porpoises has risen for the first time ever.**

The population increased by nearly a quarter in just five years, according to the latest survey from China. Numbers went up from 1,012 to 1,249, proving that efforts to save the world's only freshwater porpoise from extinction are making a real difference.

The 2022 survey found 595 individuals in the main stream of Yangtze river, along with 492 in Poyang Lake (China's largest freshwater lake) and 162 in Dongting Lake.

"It's extraordinary to finally see porpoise numbers increasing after so many years of decline," says Lunyan Lu, CEO of WWF-China. "There's still work to be done to ensure the long-term survival of this iconic species, but there is real hope for the first time in decades."

Finless porpoise populations have plummeted due to a range of threats, including pollution, sand mining, habitat loss and accidental entanglement in fishing nets. But WWF has been working with the Chinese government and other partners to protect these

cetaceans and their habitat – including by monitoring the population, relocating individual porpoises to safer areas, and working with local people to end harmful fishing practices.

"Yangtze finless porpoises are an indicator of the health of the river," explains Lu. "This significant increase shows they're thriving and that the Yangtze is too. This is critical since 400 million people and extraordinary biodiversity depend on the health of the world's third longest river."

"If the porpoises can rebound in one of the most densely populated and economically important river basins in the world, it shows we can restore ecosystems and halt species loss around the world."

"Incredible results like these for the Yangtze finless porpoise remind us that there is still hope for the world's other five remaining species of river dolphins – all of which are threatened with extinction," adds Daphne Willems, who leads WWF's work on river dolphins. "By taking steps to protect and restore their rivers and reduce threats like illegal fishing, we can help these populations – and their rivers – to thrive."



The recent rise in finless porpoise numbers is the first increase ever recorded, which is good news not just for the species but also for the rivers it calls home

© Alamy



Emperor penguins breed on sea ice. Their colonies are hard to study because they're in remote and often inaccessible places that can experience temperatures as low as -60°C in winter

HIP HIP POO-RAY! NEW PENGUIN COLONY SPOTTED

Scientists from British Antarctic Survey have found a new emperor penguin colony after spotting penguin poo in images from space!

The telltale brown stains showed up against the white snow in images taken by the European Commission's Copernicus Sentinel-2 satellite. Scientists estimate that around 500 birds live in the colony in the west of Antarctica, an area where sea ice is melting fast as the climate changes.

It brings the total of known emperor penguin colonies around the coast of Antarctica to 66 – and exactly half of those have been discovered via satellite. Observing wildlife in this remote and inhospitable region is hugely challenging, but very high-resolution satellite imagery is transforming our knowledge of penguin populations. This is crucial in understanding how penguins are being affected by climate change, and what we can do to help them adapt.

For example, knowing where penguin colonies are could help us establish marine protected areas to prevent fishing in their foraging grounds.

© Alamy

A LASTING LEGACY

**WWF supporter Keith has been a nature lover for as long as he can remember.**

"From a very young age I was interested in animals and nature and would imagine what it would be like to go on a safari," he says. "Seeing animals in zoos can't compare to seeing them in their natural environment."

Having become increasingly worried about the damage being done to the planet, not just globally but at home in the UK as well, Keith began supporting WWF more than 10 years ago. From ancient woodlands being cut down to the decline in species that he used to see every day, it was clear to Keith that the environment was in trouble and needed protecting.

While he felt he couldn't do much to tackle these issues on his own, he knew WWF could use its influence to make a difference. One of the first ways he supported WWF was by adopting an Amur leopard, and he's been inspired to see the big cat's population increasing in recent years.

Having wanted to leave a legacy for nature, Keith decided to leave a gift to WWF in his will. "I'm still worried about the future, but I see pockets of hope where WWF is doing good work



A gift in your will could help provide a brighter future for species such as Amur leopards

© Alamy

and helping to save the environment and protect species," he says.

Gifts in wills are hugely important to WWF. They help us plan for the future and strengthen our work to protect the natural world, so that future generations can continue to enjoy it. To find out more about making a lasting gift to the planet, call the gifts in wills team on **01483 412153** or email **stewardship@wwf.org.uk**.

In south-east Asia, entertainment venues that allow tourists to interact with captive tigers – taking a selfie or feeding adults or cubs – may be supplying the illegal trade in tiger parts and products

# TACKLING THE TIGER TRADE

Wild tigers are under pressure. Despite conservation successes, the road to recovery remains fraught with challenges. We must act immediately and decisively, and with your help we can secure a future for the world's most threatened big cat

**J**anuary 2023: a sunny morning in Nepal's Bardia National Park, and the alarm whistles of spotted deer suggest a predator is close. Moments later, a wild tigress pads out of the forest, three cubs scampering behind. It's a thrilling sight – and one that represents a conservation triumph. By the close of the 2022 Lunar Year of the Tiger, Nepal's wild tiger population was estimated to be 355 – almost triple the 121 individuals estimated in 2009. This achievement saw Nepal receive a TX2 Award.

TX2 stands for 'Tigers Times Two'. Launched in 2010, at the start of the Global Tiger Recovery Programme, this ambitious initiative aimed to double the global wild tiger population in 12 years. In Nepal, progress has been impressive. Worldwide, however, it's been slower, with estimated numbers rising from an all-time low of as few as 3,200 in 2010 to around 4,500 today.

Our senior programme adviser, Becci May, believes TX2 was a great success: "Having that target galvanised action; without it, things would now be a lot worse." She concedes, however, that it still fell short of its aims. "While some tiger range countries such as Bhutan, India and Nepal have substantially increased their wild tiger populations since 2010, progress hasn't been consistent. Other countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam have lost their populations, while tiger numbers in the south-east Asia region have continued to fall due to threats from illegal hunting and snaring."

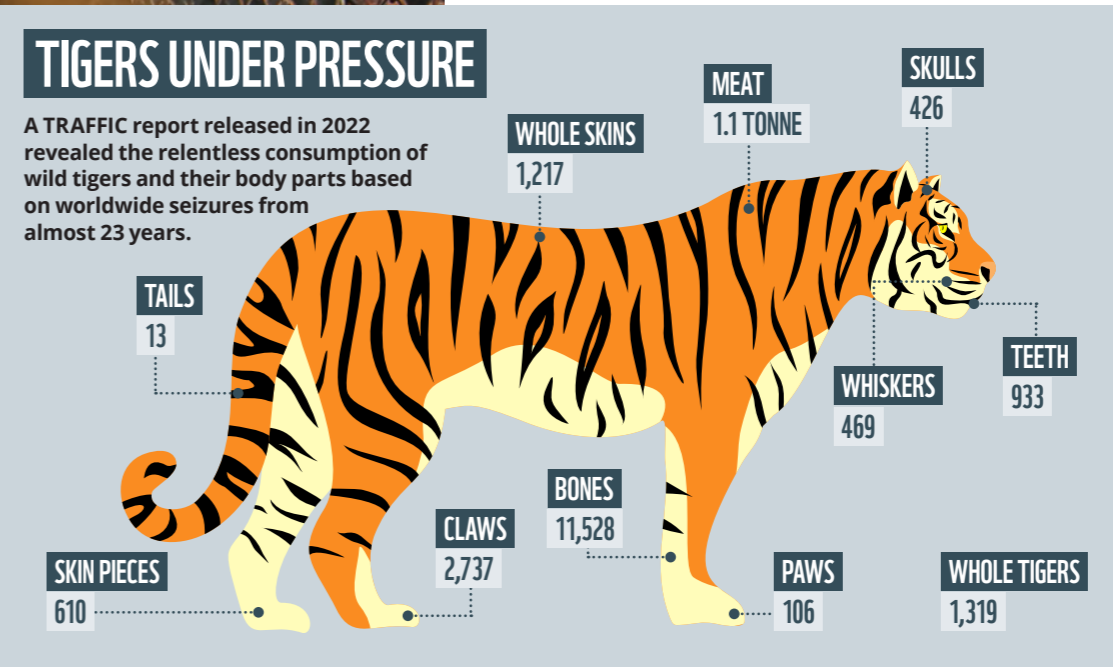
## 150 TIGERS A YEAR

The problem, overwhelmingly, is the illegal tiger trade. A November 2022 report by TRAFFIC, the global wildlife trade monitoring network, revealed that in almost 23 years from January 2000 to June 2022, authorities worldwide seized tigers, tiger parts and their derivatives equal to an average of 150 tigers a year. This adds up to at least 3,377 tigers, confiscated across 50 countries and territories.

Worse still, the data shows an increasing trend. Vietnam recorded a 185% rise in the number of tigers confiscated in the 2018-21 period compared to the previous four years, while the first half of 2022 revealed 'significant increases' in Indonesia, Russia and Thailand. The report warns that these statistics don't reflect the true extent of the illegal trade, much of which, by its very nature, goes undetected.

International trade in tigers is technically banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Yet as long as the illegal trade persists, tigers will never be safe. Killed, trafficked and sold to markets mainly in China and south-east Asia for their skin, meat, teeth, bones, claws, whiskers and all manner of derivatives, these magnificent big cats remain on the edge.

Picture the scene: a bus full of tourists drives slowly around a pen packed with tigers. The big cats follow the vehicle like sheep behind a feed truck, and when a piece of meat or a flapping chicken is flung their way, they fall upon it, snarling. The tourists snap away on their phones. This grotesque spectacle occurs in a tiger park with hundreds of tigers, where domestic and international visitors come for entertainment. In China there are estimated to be over 200 facilities keeping ►



JAN 2000-JUN 2022

**3,377**  
tigers confiscated

**2,205**  
seizure incidents

**150**  
tigers, on average, seized every year

Tiger 'farms' are captive facilities that breed tigers for the trade in the animals and their body parts. Mainly solitary in the wild, the cats are kept in horrific conditions, in small, overcrowded concrete enclosures without any kind of stimulation. Many of them exhibit symptoms of inbreeding and mental and physical distress

around 6,500 captive tigers. There are also numerous captive tiger facilities in Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, varying from large parks to backyard enclosures. In Asia today, the total number of captive tigers is over 8,000 – nearly double the wild population. Some facilities holding captive tigers are perfectly legal, but those trading in tigers and tiger parts and products are known as tiger 'farms'. They have existed since the 1980s. Some even claim to contribute to conservation, to be education facilities, circuses or zoos, but ultimately they're driving the trade in tigers. Heather Sohl, tiger trade lead for WWF Tigers Alive, explains how the huge expense of raising captive tigers means these facilities must survive on more than their visitor income alone. "Claiming to be zoos or educational facilities doesn't hide the fact that tiger farms are involved in illegal trade – a trade driving the loss of tigers in the wild." Supporters of tiger farms claim that they could reduce the illegal trade; that

## "IN ASIA TODAY, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPTIVE TIGERS IS OVER 8,000 - NEARLY DOUBLE THE WILD POPULATION"

flooding the market with captive tiger products would fulfil demand and stop poaching. However, these farms can stimulate a greater demand for tiger products, which in turn can encourage the poaching of wild tigers. Controlling tiger farms is therefore crucial to tiger conservation. At present, the industry is largely

unregulated. "It's a Wild West out there," says Becci. "There's no system in place to identify illegal captive facilities, how many tigers are held, and how or where they're being moved." Furthermore, law enforcement is complicated by the fact that DNA in products such as tiger bone wine is so degraded that investigation teams can't work out whether they come from wild or captive animals. Ultimately, tiger farms must be phased out. In the short term, however, we need more transparency and oversight, with stronger law enforcement. Some progress is being made. "We're working with governments to promote and support better understanding,

controls and management of existing captive tigers and their facilities, while discouraging breeding and clamping down on the trade," says Heather. In the US – home to an estimated 5,000 captive tigers, many in inappropriate conditions – the Big Cat Public Safety Act, signed into law last year, will strengthen the laws governing big cats in captivity. Though there's little evidence currently of direct US involvement in the illegal tiger trade, this is nonetheless a welcome step. "We hope other governments, particularly those with tiger farms, will soon follow America's lead," says WWF-US director of wildlife policy Leigh Henry.



The illegal trade means that tigers remain in severe danger on the ground. A 2020 WWF report identified snaring as the "greatest threat to the long-term presence of the tiger in south-east Asia". The problem has been fuelled in recent years by a growing demand among urban consumers for wildlife meat. As a result, countless snares are now strewn across the forest floors of the region, lying in wait for unsuspecting wildlife.

### AN INSIDIOUS THREAT TO LIFE

For poachers, tigers are the jackpot. However, snares threaten hundreds of species across this prolifically biodiverse region. While certain animals, such as wild pigs, may be the target, the arbitrary nature of snares – invisible death traps hidden deep in the forest for weeks on end – means that anything might be caught, including rare species such as banteng and saola (both wild cattle). Victims die from starvation, in great pain. For the anti-poaching authorities, snares are an insidious enemy. They're extremely hard to find, requiring regular foot patrols in challenging terrain, and even harder to trace

to individuals. A lack of clear regulation and effective law enforcement means that many poachers get away with their crimes. Progress is possible. In Malaysia – the only country in the region that defines what legally constitutes a snare – snaring is rife, with over 53,000 traps confiscated a year across 11 protected areas. But in Belum-Temengor Forest Complex, a team of rangers from the Indigenous community, equipped with SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) tracking technology that we provided, has reduced the number of active snares by an amazing 94%. Their efforts brought a special reward in January 2022, when a camera trap recorded four tiger cubs with their mother. Poachers seldom act alone. Behind them are international crime syndicates that process and traffic the tigers, plus their parts and products. These typically form part of larger crime organisations, often involved in other illicit activities such as drugs, weapons and people-trafficking, and facilitated by corruption. Combating them requires the cooperation of all law-enforcement bodies across the region, working alongside ▶

◀ To provide a constant supply of cute cubs for photos with tourists, there is often speed breeding in captivity, with cubs torn from their mothers a few weeks after being born. They spend their whole lives in captivity, and are subjected to abusive training practices

▼ BELOW: Over the almost 23 years covered by the study, tiger skins remained the most frequently seized item, found in 902 incidents, followed by whole tigers (618 incidents) and tiger bones (411 incidents). Tiger skins are used as luxury home décor among China's elite



TRAFFIC and other NGOs, plus an international database to record, identify and share the sources of any tiger products seized.

It's a complex challenge. "The case studies of success in tackling the tiger trade need to be amplified to a bigger picture," says Heather. "This means greater use of investigative tools and approaches such as analysing digital information, following the money from crimes and targeting the key players, while also strengthening prosecutions and punishments to deter future crimes."

## REDUCING DEMAND

Of course, there would be no poaching or trafficking of tigers – captive or wild – if nobody wanted them. So we must also tackle the market. Initiatives to reduce demand across the region are already under way.

"We run campaigns encouraging people to pledge not to use tiger parts and products," says Heather, explaining how social media messages are reaching millions. "We've also carried out consumer surveys to give us an in-depth understanding of which tiger parts and products are most sought after, who's buying them, and what motivates them to do so. Using that information, we can develop effective social and behaviour-change campaigns."

Early findings are interesting. Surveys reveal, for example, that the typical male consumer of tiger products in Vietnam is high-school educated and aged 45-60. Tiger products are often sought for social status



Traffickers also buy and sell cubs. Many are sold as pets or exploited in attractions where people pay to pose with them. As the cubs grow older and become more difficult to handle, they may become part of the trade in tiger body parts

## "THERE WOULD BE NO TRAFFICKING OF TIGERS - CAPTIVE OR WILD - IF NOBODY WANTED THEM"

rather than any supposed health benefits. They also reveal that misinformation is rife. "Many people in China don't know how few wild tigers there are in the world," says Heather. She describes visiting one

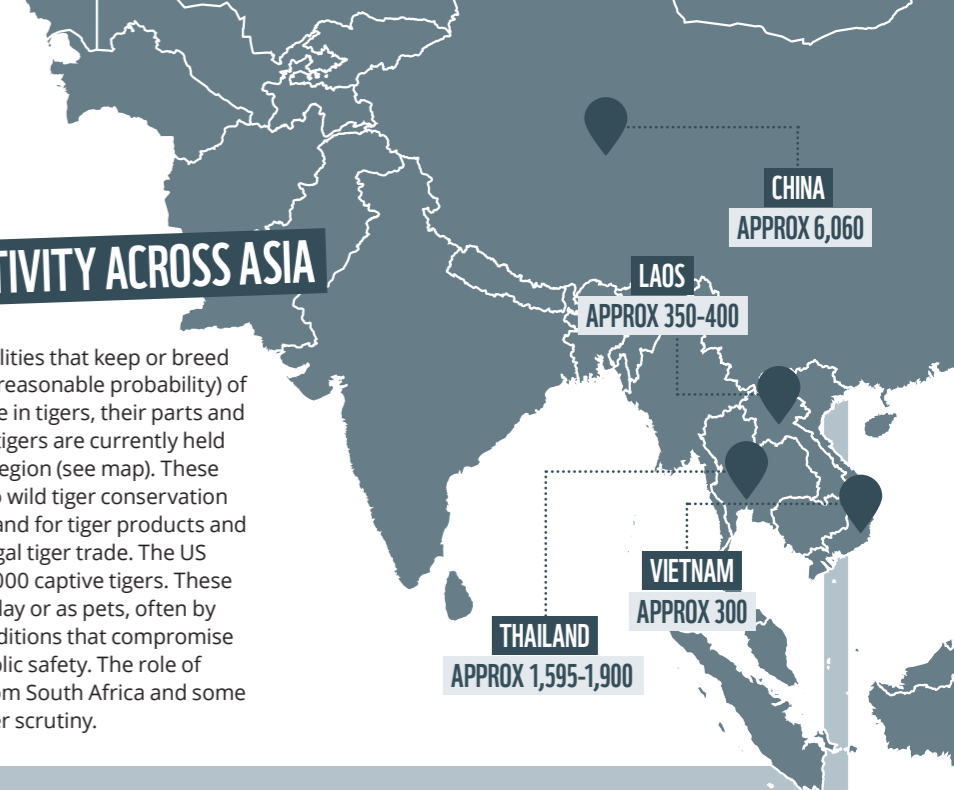
Thailand zoo where "farcical" murals in the tiger enclosures depict scenes of the African savannah, which has never been part of the tiger's natural range.

Social and behaviour change initiatives, together with the private and public sectors taking action to reduce the ivory trade in China, have already helped reduce the demand for elephant ivory since it was made illegal there in December 2017. Heather hopes similar results can be achieved with tigers.

"China has done a fantastic job in securing a breeding population of wild tigers," she says. "But we can't ignore the flip side: that its market is having a massive impact on other tiger range countries." She believes that a campaign to reduce demand among Chinese consumers can lessen this impact, starting by telling the truth about tiger farms. "There are better places to go to learn about tigers," she says. "They belong in the wild."

## TIGERS IN CAPTIVITY ACROSS ASIA

Asia's tiger farms are facilities that keep or breed tigers with the intent (or reasonable probability) of supplying the illegal trade in tigers, their parts and products. At least 8,000 tigers are currently held in China and across the region (see map). These farms don't contribute to wild tiger conservation but perpetuate the demand for tiger products and provide cover for the illegal tiger trade. The US also has an estimated 5,000 captive tigers. These animals are held for display or as pets, often by untrained owners in conditions that compromise the cats' welfare and public safety. The role of captive tigers in trade from South Africa and some EU countries is also under scrutiny.



effective decisions," says Heather. "But at least we didn't lose ground; some wording was strengthened and deadlines were set."

Phase two of the Global Tiger Recovery Programme will end in 2034, the next Lunar Year of the Tiger. "Over the next 12 years we have the opportunity to use bold and ambitious conservation interventions to return tigers to their former range," says Stuart Chapman, leader of WWF Tigers Alive Initiative. To address the challenges that lie ahead – from banning all trade and strengthening law enforcement, to phasing out tiger farms and reducing consumer demand – we've put together a 'tiger vision' with our partners. This includes the Tackling Tiger Trafficking Framework, a set of tools and approaches proven to help combat the illegal trade. The coalition has also been advocating for and working on the science in support of a target for expanding tiger range.

So, is the tiger conservation cup half full or half empty? "What's been achieved since 2010 is huge," says Heather. "Just halting the decline would have been a significant achievement, but populations in some countries have actually increased." Still, she stresses there's no room for complacency.

Kanitha Krishnasamy, director for TRAFFIC in south-east Asia, agrees. "The evidence clearly shows poaching and illegal trade are not temporary threats. Unless we want to see wild tigers wiped out in our lifetime, immediate and time-bound actions must be a priority." This may be our greatest challenge yet – but, with your support, we can help secure the future for wild tigers. ■

Illegal trade isn't the only challenge. Others include finding space for tigers where their numbers are increasing – for example, by maintaining and restoring corridors between protected areas – and, where they're thriving, addressing the problems of conflict with people. "Finding ways to help reduce risks and increase the benefits from tiger conservation, by partnering with local communities, is crucial to sustaining the good work done in Bhutan, India and Nepal," says Becci.

## MEETING THE CHALLENGE

This all requires international cooperation, and progress can be slow. At last year's meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, tigers were a priority for WWF. But only three out of 13 tiger-range countries had provided the requisite reports on progress in controlling the tiger trade. "Without enough information, CITES struggles to make

## STOP THE TIGER TRADE

You already support our work in China, India and Nepal to tackle tiger trade, but we need to do more to end the relentless pursuit of remaining wild tigers and reduce demand for their parts and products. Will you help stop this horrifying trade before it's too late?

- £10** could help monitor and report illegal online trade in tigers and their parts
- £20** could provide training resources to help authorities identify illegally traded wildlife parts
- £50** could help support a targeted campaign to reduce demand for tiger parts and products
- £100** could support international information-sharing linked to seizures and trade routes

Help us to protect tigers and tackle the illegal wildlife trade. Donate today at [wwf.org.uk/tiger-trade](http://wwf.org.uk/tiger-trade)





## CATCH UP NOW

You can still watch the Oceans episode of *Wild Isles* featuring basking sharks on BBC iPlayer: [www.wwf.org.uk/watch-wildisles](http://www.wwf.org.uk/watch-wildisles)



## MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLERS

**The UK's fertile seas support spectacular wildlife, from tiny seahorses to huge basking sharks. But, currently, less than 1% is safe from damaging practices that are putting this richness at risk.**

The UK's seas should be some of the most productive on our planet: teeming with wildlife, a source of sustainable food and a key ally in our fight against climate change. But they're under serious threat. Warming and increasingly acidic waters, unsustainable fishing practices and a lack of large-scale action to protect our seas are jeopardising the entire marine food web, from minuscule plankton to the second largest fish in the world, the basking shark.

These gentle giants can be as long as a double-decker bus and weigh seven tonnes. Every year more than 20,000 of them gather on our western coastlines to feed in our plankton-rich seas. The waters here are vital for maintaining the global population of basking sharks. So we supported research that contributed to the Sea of the Hebrides Marine Protected Area (MPA) being designated as the world's first MPA for basking sharks.

We can turn the tide and give our seas a real chance to recover, so that they continue to support the astonishing diversity of life in our wild isles.

Beavers are often referred to as ecosystem engineers because of their significant positive influence on their environment. They create and maintain diverse habitats, restoring degraded areas and increasing plant richness

# A WILDER NORFOLK

**D**eep in a secluded patch of the Glaven Valley, a quiet miracle is unfolding. New ponds have appeared, dark and still. Around their fringes, lush foliage is shaded by new-growth willow and hazel. Frogs and toads are thriving, along with small fish and insects that attract birds and bats.

Such wet 'carr' woodland, largely in retreat elsewhere, is resurgent in this six-hectare tract of north Norfolk. But it's not the result of human habitat restoration. Rather, it's the work of two hardworking individuals – both

with prominent teeth, gleaming fur and large, flat, paddle-like tails.

This pair of Eurasian beavers – Winnie and Eeyore – were introduced to an enclosure in September 2021 by our partner, Norfolk Rivers Trust. The changes the duo have already made within this area – building lodges and dams and creating wildlife-rich ponds – hint at the wider impact we hope they'll have after their proposed release into the wild. It's one of the most exciting elements of our ambitious approach to nature recovery in the county.

"Lots of amazing work has gone into reversing nature loss and restoring UK habitats over the past 20 or so years, yet nature continues to decline," says Emma Martin, WWF's UK landscapes manager. "Our environment desperately needs help to restore itself. So we're attempting to apply the knowledge gained from international work to a UK setting, supporting various authorities, environmental organisations, landowners and particularly communities to deliver the changes needed to halt and reverse global biodiversity loss by 2030.

Restoring nature across Norfolk's diverse habitats is the focus of an ambitious project – one that involves the reintroduction of a distinctive and industrious character long absent from our countryside

"Our 'wholescape' approach will potentially show how changes on land can lead to the recovery of rivers and coastal systems, and will create models for how these ecosystems can be managed holistically, because they're all connected," says Emma. "Norfolk is our pilot project and we're forging ahead with support and investment from the John Lewis Partnership, as part of a collaboration to recover UK habitats where the company sources its produce and materials."

Norfolk encompasses a large proportion of England's – indeed, the world's – rare and

precious chalk streams, which are home to endangered species such as white-clawed crayfish (see page 28). And it's here you'll find the Broads, where over a quarter of the UK's rarest and most threatened species are found, including the European eel and swallowtail butterfly.

## BENEFITS OF BEAVERS

But Norfolk also illustrates the daunting scale of the 'triple challenge': limiting climate change, reversing biodiversity loss and meeting people's needs. The climate crisis is

felt in the form of coastal erosion, flooding, droughts and even wildfires, with 674 blazes recorded in summer 2022 alone. The nature crisis is hitting, too; a 2018 report by Natural England suggested the condition of the natural coastal environment in north Norfolk is deteriorating. The third part of the equation relates to human needs, from food security to housing, health, wellbeing and more.

A big challenge requires big ambition to tackle it – and beavers can play a role. "The beaver can become a poster child for wholescape work," explains Paul De Ornellas, ►

In many places, beavers live happily side-by-side with people.

When there's a lot of rain, beaver dams and the waterways that spread out all around them hold back vast amounts of water. This can mean there's less flooding downstream.

When a beaver fells a willow, many more young trees spring up from the stump.

The beavers' gnawing activities increase woody debris in rivers, which boosts bug life. More aquatic insects survive to become winged adults - food for birds and dragonflies.

Felling trees opens up patches of dense woodland alongside the water and allows the sunlight in. This encourages plants to grow and insects to increase.

Grey herons hunt fish and amphibians in beaver pools. In winter, busy beavers keep the water ice-free so that herons and other birds can still find food.

Large dams act as bridges for smaller animals, helping them to cross the water.

White willow is the beaver's favourite food tree, followed by ash, rowan, hazel, birch and alder.

The abundance of small fish in beaver pools attracts kingfishers. They benefit from lots of perches, and still and shady water that helps them see their prey more easily.

Brown trout tend to be larger, and larger fish are more numerous in rivers that have been dammed by beavers, due to an increase in the abundance of food.

Grass snakes hunt the fringes of beaver pools and sometimes seek shelter in a lodge.

The presence of beavers can boost the food, cover and survival rates of fish.



## BRINGING BACK BURBOT

Another species potentially returning to Norfolk waters is the burbot. This freshwater fish was lost from the UK half a century ago, probably as a result of agricultural pollution and habitat destruction. “Following work we’ve funded in Norfolk, there are now rivers that can support burbot populations,” says Emma. “The Wissey, a chalk stream, has the right conditions for these fish to thrive.” WWF’s partner, Norfolk Rivers Trust, is currently laying the groundwork for a planned reintroduction, hopefully in the next couple of years, which wouldn’t have been possible without funding from our partner, Finish.

WWF’s chief wildlife adviser. “It’s a keystone species – an ecosystem engineer that helps deliver nature-based solutions to problems across multiple habitats.”

How so? Well, a beaver’s dome-shaped lodge, built using woody debris and mud, has underwater entrances to ensure relative safety from predators. Beavers dam watercourses – again using wood, mud and stones – to create ponds deep enough for those underwater entrances, and to provide places to forage for food – aquatic plants and the leaves, twigs and bark of trees.

### LANDSCAPE ENGINEERS

Those ponds aren’t just ideal habitat for a diverse range of species, boosting biodiversity. They also hold water in dry periods, helping mitigate the effects of droughts. They significantly slow water flow, helping reduce flood risk and erosion downstream. By trapping silt and agricultural run-off, they improve water quality. There’s also some evidence that these modified habitats could be net carbon sinks, too, though more research is needed.

That’s not to mention the enjoyment and wellbeing they can provide for local communities. These benefits may not be limited to the land and fresh water in this area, but could extend downstream to the coast and even out to sea.

The catch, of course, is that we’re not used to sharing a landscape with beavers. They’ve been absent from Britain for most of

The beaver is the only mammal, other than humans, that builds structures to modify its environment. Beaver dams can help to reduce flood risks for people living downstream

the past four centuries, victims of hunting for meat, fur and castoreum (glandular oil used in perfumes). Shortly after the millennium, beavers appeared on the River Tay in Scotland – escapees from an unlicensed fenced population or deliberately released without licence. Around 2008, beavers were also spotted on the River Otter in Devon.

The following year, the Scottish Beaver Trial was launched at Knapdale, Argyll, with the first officially sanctioned introduction – indeed, the first formal reintroduction of a native mammal species in Britain. Beavers have since come to light elsewhere, and in 2020 the government announced that the families living wild on the Otter would be allowed to stay. England is now thought to be home to over 150 beavers.

“Even 10 years ago, I wouldn’t have believed the licensed reintroduction of a long-eradicated species such as the beaver could happen here,” says Paul. “Now Norfolk Rivers Trust is one of several organisations across

## “BEAVERS HELP REDUCE FLOOD RISK AND EROSION DOWNSTREAM”

the UK working with beavers, so we’ll be able to see for ourselves the potential benefits to landscapes, waterways and people.”

Once an application has been made and agreed, Winnie and Eeyore will be released into the wild, where they’ll contribute to the restoration of nature. Even within their secure enclosure they’ve shown what they can do. “They’ve created marvellous ponds in what would have otherwise been a very dry woodland,” observes Ed Bramham-Jones, chief executive of Norfolk Rivers Trust. “They’re holding back water, bringing improvements in terms of flood risk, trapping

sediment and soil that would otherwise flow downstream into rivers, and creating important ‘carr’ wet woodland.”

### PREDICTING THE FUTURE

There are plenty of precedents, with more than 200 official beaver reintroduction projects across Europe to learn from. That’s informed the creation of a management plan, including consideration of mitigation measures to address any problems that might arise after Winnie and Eeyore are released. “Using data sets of beaver movements elsewhere, mapped onto river systems in Norfolk, researchers have established where Winnie and Eeyore are most likely to move when released,” explains Emma.

That’s important, because people are at the heart of reintroduction efforts, which involve working with local communities, landowners and farmers to ensure they have a voice in the process.

“One of the things that’s most exciting about the return of beavers – the profound

impact they can have on ecosystems – can also pose challenges,” explains Paul. “They create wetlands and alter forest habitats, which can be fantastic for biodiversity, for regulating rivers, for flood risk. But if it’s your farm that’s been flooded, the embankment next to your property that’s undermined by burrowing, or your trees felled – well, people are understandably concerned. That’s why introductions need to be done with local communities, and mitigation approaches must be available, so that if anything does go wrong they can do something about it.”

“Our management plan identifies potential hotspots where the beavers could have a detrimental impact,” adds Ed. “We may then have to encourage them to move somewhere else in the river catchment where



Felling trees changes closed canopy forest into open woodland, and this supports plant growth and biodiversity



Beavers build lodges from woody debris, twigs and soil. They’re a safe place to eat, sleep and raise young, and a refuge for other wildlife

they can live happily with farming and with communities. But they’re really good at choosing the right sites themselves, and they do a much better job than we could with the habitat they create.”

That observation goes right to the heart of nature recovery efforts: it’s about enabling nature to restore itself. “The return of the beaver to the UK is an inspirational story,” concludes Paul. “We hope that in 10 to 20 years’ time, we can see the beaver playing the role it used to play here, as an integral part of Norfolk’s natural heritage.”

### NATURE’S BUILDERS

Watch footage of Winnie and Eeyore, and learn more about these ecosystem engineers in our short film from the *Wild Isles* team: [myaction.wwf.org.uk/natures-builders](http://myaction.wwf.org.uk/natures-builders)



My Action



# WILD FAMILY FUN



For many of us, our most treasured childhood memories are rooted in nature. Whether it's a seaside holiday or playing in an unruly garden, these formative experiences stick in the heart and mind, kindling a lifelong love of wildlife.

Summer is nature's busiest season, so it's a fantastic time to get outdoors to see what the buzz is all about. Wildflowers create rainbow splashes of colour, supporting vital pollinators. Woodlands hum with life, and keen-eyed nature detectives will find lots of signs of secretive creatures. Who can resist the urge to be near water on a hot summer's day? Sparkling rivers teem with freshwater life, while a quick search of a coastal rockpool will reveal weird and wonderful sea creatures.

Time spent outdoors is not only great for beating boredom, it's also good for you, boosting your mood and reducing stress. There's so much you can do together in nature as a family this summer. Jon Turner, our head of education, shares some activities for all ages that are easy, free or low cost, so why not start making memories today that you'll treasure for ever?

## TAKE A FOREST BATH

Have you ever bathed in a forest? It's not what it sounds like! The Japanese art of forest bathing (*shinrin-yoku*) is a simple relaxation technique where you take time out, slow down and stay quiet among the trees, taking notice of the nature all around as you breathe deeply to help unwind, be present and de-stress. To find more ways that trees can improve wellbeing, see our *Thriving With Nature* guide at [wwf.org.uk/nature-guide](http://wwf.org.uk/nature-guide)

## GARDEN SAFARI

A garden safari is a great way for young people to explore and learn about a garden, local park or other outdoor space. Take a notebook to record anything you see, and use iNaturalist's Seek app to help identify any plants or other wildlife you find. There are tips on planning a safari on our website, as well as downloadable activity sheets: [wwf.org.uk/garden-safari](http://wwf.org.uk/garden-safari)



## MAKE A MINI POND

Building a pond is one of the best things you can do to attract wildlife to your garden, and it's really easy – you don't even need to do any digging. An old washing up bowl is the perfect place to start – just add stones, plants and rainwater. Once some wildlife has moved in, you can become dipping detectives, discovering a world of amazing nature below the surface. There are simple instructions on how to make a mini-pond – and become a pond-dipper – at [wwf.org.uk/mini-pond](http://wwf.org.uk/mini-pond)



## GET GROWING, COOKING AND CREATING



Summer's the best time to enjoy really fresh local produce. Visit a pick-your-own farm and try making jam with your haul of fruit – then have a go at baking jam tarts. Even with limited outdoor space you can grow your own food. Start with salad leaves – they only need a small space, like a pot or windowbox, and the more you pick, the more they grow! Download our guide to seasonal activities to find out more: [wwf.org.uk/summer](http://wwf.org.uk/summer)

## CREATE WILD ART



Why not create a wild family masterpiece in your back garden, local park or local woods? Just use your imagination and whatever natural objects you find and get creative. Don't pick or damage living plants or disturb wildlife – only use leaves, petals or other natural materials that are on the ground. When you've finished, take a photo but leave your art behind for nature to reclaim.

## DISCOVER NIGHT-TIME NATURE

Long, lighter summer evenings are a great time to go out for a nature walk – particularly when the days are too hot. At dusk, nocturnal animals such as hedgehogs, foxes and owls emerge, while bats and swifts swoop after airborne insects at high speed. Take some time to sit, watch and listen. Make a sound recording on your phone, or take a sketchbook to draw anything that catches your eye. Don't forget a torch in case you're out late, and a jumper as it can get chilly.



## ENJOY THE DAWN CHORUS



Nature's greatest concert – the dawn chorus – is one of the most uplifting and accessible wildlife spectacles the UK has to offer. It's on every morning until July and well worth getting everyone out of bed early for. Why not set your alarm, wrap up in blankets, take hot chocolate and make it a family adventure? The first birds begin singing about an hour before sunrise, and the RSPB has produced a handy guide that will help you identify all the individual species from their calls: [wwf.org.uk/dawn-chorus](http://wwf.org.uk/dawn-chorus)

## EXPLORE THE SEASIDE



The seaside is within easy reach for many of us, so take some time to discover the nature on our shores. As the tide retreats, it reveals some stars of the ocean left behind in rock pools. Look up to see black-headed gulls and other seabirds. Binoculars can help you spot wildlife further out to sea, such as seals, dolphins or even basking sharks. Download a guide to seaside nature from [wwf.org.uk/seaside-guide](http://wwf.org.uk/seaside-guide)

## CHALLENGE YOURSELVES

Feeling competitive? Download our My Footprint app and tackle some of its challenges to see if you can reduce your environmental impact. Who will complete the most challenges over the holidays? Invite your friends to take part too. You can filter the app's content by subject – choose 'Nature' to discover activities such as foraging or building a bug-friendly habitat. [wwf.org.uk/myfootprint](http://wwf.org.uk/myfootprint)



# CREATE AMAZING MEMORIES BY GETTING OUT AND EXPLORING THE BEST OF BRITISH NATURE...

## SHARE YOUR IDEAS!



We'd love to hear about the nature activities that you enjoy with your family. **Share your tips** with us and we'll publish the best ideas on [wwf.org.uk/myaction](http://wwf.org.uk/myaction) in time for the school holidays, so that everyone can have a more wildlife-friendly summer. Email [editor@wwf.org.uk](mailto:editor@wwf.org.uk) by Friday 16 July.

The Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund is making it easier for local groups to ensure everyone can take action for nature

**HELP US BRING NATURE BACK**

Everyone can play their part. To apply for funds or donate to projects like these, visit [www.wwf.org.uk/community-fund](http://www.wwf.org.uk/community-fund)

# Working together for OUR WILD ISLES

**Wild Isles raised awareness of the nature crisis in the UK. Now our new community fund is providing support for local communities to take action**

Small community-based organisations across the UK play a crucial part in protecting and restoring nature, but these local groups need more support. A new initiative from WWF, the RSPB and Aviva is trying to change that. The Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund is providing financial and practical support for community groups across the UK to help them take action for nature at a local level – a key part of the Save Our Wild Isles campaign.

Communities are hugely important in bringing people together to tackle local issues, including nature loss. The Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund is particularly focused on supporting groups where the need is greatest, with an emphasis on projects that restore nature, encourage people from diverse backgrounds to connect with each other, and promote a greater connection between people and nature.

Local organisations play an important part in helping bring nature back into the

area and running activities that are beneficial to their communities, through activities such as building community gardens, protecting local wildlife and providing access to green spaces.

The premise of the scheme is simple. Aviva has partnered with WWF and the

## COMMUNITIES ARE HUGEY IMPORTANT IN BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO TACKLE LOCAL ISSUES

RSPB, and is giving £1 million to support community groups across the UK to protect and restore nature in their area. If you're active in an organisation that wants to take action to protect and restore our wild isles, you can apply to launch your own

crowdfunding campaign. Projects that are accepted to the Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund will receive matched funding from Aviva at a rate of £2 to every £1 donated (for pledges of up to £250) until £1 million of funding has been allocated.

"It's so welcome that a big organisation is recognising the importance of small ones," says KMT, who manages a community group in south London (see right). "WWF can raise awareness and shine a light towards greater funds for us. Raising awareness of what we do is quite hard for us, being a grassroots organisation."

Rosie Burrell, programme manager for Interfaith Glasgow (see top right), says the new fund has been launched at the right moment. "We were having a funding crisis when WWF contacted us about this crowdfunding opportunity," she explains. "It was great timing because our core funding had just been cut, which was devastating. The funding landscape for small charities is really difficult at the moment so it couldn't have come at a better time."



**SCOTLAND**

### INTERFAITH GLASGOW'S WEEKEND CLUB

The refugees and asylum seekers who meet once a month at Interfaith Glasgow's Weekend Club are offered a sense of belonging and purpose through family-friendly events, many of which are nature-based and designed to benefit the environment around the city. "Asylum seekers don't have the right to work and they spend a lot of time indoors, cooped up because of their lack of income," says programme manager Rosie Burrell. "Last year, we ran tree-planting, wildflower meadow-sowing and birdbox-building activities and participants loved it. We want to give them opportunities to get out in nature, meet people and enjoy activities that make them feel like they're doing something useful. These people don't just want to be part of the community; they want to contribute to it. It's important for them to have confidence they're doing that, and it's good for their mental health."



**WALES**

### DENBIGH'S PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

Volunteers in Denbigh's People's Assembly have set up a Growing Group to encourage the community to grow and share fresh, local food. Having been given an allotment in the town centre, they're now targeting other small growing spaces. "We want to reach out to the community and find people who are interested, and people who may never have thought about growing their own food, to help them get involved," explains core group member Sue Lewis. "Our aim is to provide equipment and bring in expert growers to teach people skills. We want everyone to be able to afford fresh vegetables, contributing to good health and building climate resilience through reducing food miles. We already share surplus food from local supermarkets through our Community Fridge. We aim to share food without any stigma about it being free, including surplus from the allotments."



**ENGLAND**

### MAY PROJECT GARDENS

In the London borough of Merton, KMT (left) leads May Project Gardens, a grassroots, Black-led group empowering people on the margins of society by connecting them with nature in his late mother's garden. "We're fundraising for our Natural City Living programme, planning to renovate our space and run workshops for the community about all aspects of wellbeing – growing sustainable food is a crucial component," he says. "We'll be handing over the gardens for people to innovate and develop entrepreneurial skills. Tutors need a safe space to develop their workshop skills. And just as nature thrives best when it's more biodiverse, we use the same ethos in terms of how we work. The environmental sector is one of the least diverse, so we strive to be inclusive, appealing to people on the edge: young people (especially Black men), single mums, people with mental health issues and the LGBTQ community."



# CRAYFISH IN CRISIS

Ursula's work to restore rivers provides better habitat and cleaner water for white-clawed crayfish across Norfolk. 'Untidy' undisturbed rivers with large, woody tree trunks and roots that are left in the river are best

## Extinction is unthinkable for Norfolk Rivers Trust's *Ursula Juta*, who's working to protect the white-clawed crayfish, one of Britain's rarest native freshwater species

### What does your job involve?

As senior project officer for Norfolk Rivers Trust, I carry out environmental surveys on everything from water voles to fish and crustaceans such as crayfish, and even plants. It's very varied. I also work on exciting river restoration projects. I just love being in the water and getting outdoors finding out cool stuff. I'm also passionate about securing a future for endangered white-clawed crayfish.

### Tell us more about crayfish.

White-clawed crayfish are the UK's only native crayfish species and, at up to three inches long, they're also one of our largest invertebrates. They live in rivers, streams, lakes and canals, where they're important ecosystem engineers, which means they influence their habitat in ways that help other wildlife thrive. Their burrowing modifies riverbeds and they help keep populations of other species in check by eating everything from other invertebrates to carrion and dead and dying water plants. This helps clean the water that people drink, swim and play in. They also provide food for fish, herons and otters.

### Do crayfish have a bigger role to play?

White-clawed crayfish aren't only vital to the health of the whole aquatic ecosystem, they're also useful indicators of water quality. They can't survive in polluted or deoxygenated water, so their presence in a waterbody indicates really good, clean, mineral-rich water. We use them to monitor the health of our rivers.

### So what's the problem?

White-clawed crayfish are declining rapidly across the UK – around 70% of the population has been lost since the 1970s. The biggest threat is the signal crayfish, an invasive species introduced from North America to Europe in the 1970s. This species is stronger and breeds more quickly than our native crayfish,

so it outcompetes them. It also carries a disease known as crayfish plague, which the poor white-clawed crayfish has no immunity to. It wipes them out within seven days of infection.

### That sounds like bad news...

Yes. Signal crayfish also damage and destabilise riverbanks with their burrowing, causing them to collapse and dump sediment into the watercourse. This not only deprives white-clawed crayfish and other wildlife of good vegetated bankside habitat, but the silt can blanket gravel beds that trout need to lay their eggs in.

### What are you doing to help?

Thankfully here in Norfolk there are about seven populations and they're fairly stable. In the rest of the country, conservation efforts are needed to protect the species. I help to maintain the Norfolk populations, look for 'lost' populations of white-clawed crayfish that are thought to have gone extinct, and hunt down invasive crayfish. I also look for safe places where new populations of white-clawed can be established. These are known as ark sites. We breed young crayfish in a hatchery at Banham Zoo and then work with landowners to identify suitable rivers where we can release them. Our captive breeding programme has a high success rate: around 90% of our hatchlings survive, compared to only around 5% in the wild.

### What gives you hope for the future?

It's scary to think that white-clawed crayfish could go extinct on my watch, but knowing I'm doing the right thing, something good, is what gets me up in the morning. I know that finding and protecting the crayfish is critical for them and for the whole environment. Seeing lots of conservation groups working together gives me hope. By teaming up, we can achieve more – sharing expertise, volunteers and funding sources. I'm excited to tell people – from landowners to schoolchildren – about the white-clawed crayfish, so they can learn and start to care about it, change their attitudes and their habits. All those little things add up in the long run.

### DEEP DIVE

See Ursula at work and meet other nature protectors in our *Bringing UK Nature Back To Life* series





## PLAY, LEARN - AND GROW!

We've got four PlayMonster grow-your-own mini landscape playsets to give away

PlayMonster's 'Grow & Play' is a unique collection of playsets designed to inspire a love of nature. Each of the four sets, made from 100% recycled plastic, includes seeds for children to grow a lush, green habitat for one of four animals, whether it's a tiger's hideout sprouted from grass or an orangutan's treetop home grown from coriander. The playsets teach children how to grow and nurture their own plants, while encouraging them to learn about protecting endangered species' habitats. Both the product and packaging are 100% recyclable, and PlayMonster will make a donation to WWF with each playset sold. We've got four sets to give away – one each for four winners. **For your chance to win, follow the instructions in the box below.**



CHECK OUT OUR FULL RANGE OF SUSTAINABLE GIFTS AT [SHOP.WWF.ORG.UK](http://SHOP.WWF.ORG.UK)

## BECOME A BEE-FRIENDER

We've got three Beevive bee revival kits to give away so you're always ready to help

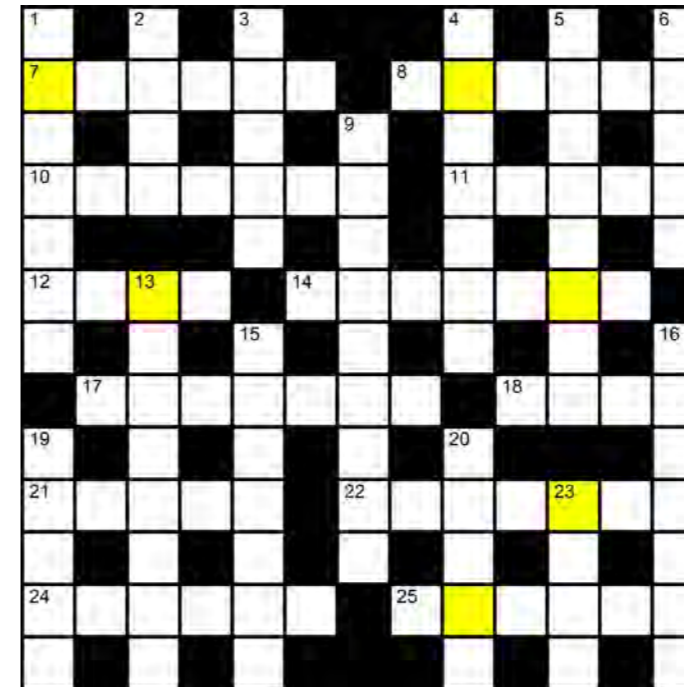
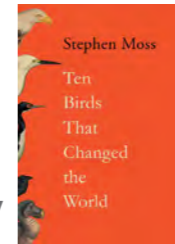
Just like us, bumblebees sometimes need a pick-me-up. Bad weather and an exhaustive search for nectar-filled flowers can leave them grounded, especially early-emerging queens. If you find a bee that's been on the ground for more than 30-45 minutes and can't find a bee-friendly flower to relocate it to, you can give it an energy boost with a bee-revival kit from Beevive.

The kit contains a vial of energising sugar water, and comes as a handy bamboo keyring so you can carry it with you wherever you go. Each kit also comes with an instruction leaflet that explains the best steps for approaching your bee.

**We've got three kits to give away – for your chance to win, see the box below.**

## CROSSWORD

Solve our puzzle and you could win a copy of *Ten Birds That Changed the World* by Stephen Moss, £16.99, courtesy of Faber



WWF ACTION CROSSWORD 54: Summer 2023. Compiled by Aleric Linden

After solving the crossword, take each letter from the shaded squares (going from left to right and top to bottom) to spell out the prize word. To be in with a chance to win, just send a postcard with the prize word to the address on page 30, or email it to [competition@wwf.org.uk](mailto:competition@wwf.org.uk). The closing date is Friday 21 July 2023.

### Clues across

- 7 A long walk in the countryside (6)
- 8 The illegal trade in this delicacy puts sturgeon in jeopardy (6)
- 10 Clean energy generator on wind farms (7)
- 11 A home built by beavers (5)
- 12 Come to the rescue of endangered animals (4)
- 14 Marine Stewardship \_, sustainable fishing organisation (7)
- 17 Part of the River Severn with huge tidal power potential (7)
- 18 The yellow-tailed woolly monkey is endemic to this South American country (4)
- 21 The Trent or Wye (5)
- 22 Conservation status of wolves in the UK (7)
- 24 Bahamian rock \_, critically endangered lizard species (6)
- 25 Any device that warms (6)
- 5 Illegal \_ trade, it involves poaching and trafficking threatened animals (8)
- 6 An environmentally-friendly colour (5)
- 9 Natural \_, useful assets from the environment (9)
- 13 Active volcano near Naples (8)
- 15 Flowing movement of water or air (7)
- 16 Great \_, the world's heaviest flying bird (7)
- 19 It's on track as a viable alternative to flying or driving (5)
- 20 Holt-dwelling member of the weasel family (5)
- 23 Fishing equipment in which dolphins and porpoises can become tangled and drown (4)

### Spring 2023 answers

Prize word: RESCUE  
 Across 8. Earth 9. Ice floe 10. Credits 11. Tibet 13. Ruhr 14. Bicycle 16. Museums 17. Dams 19. Trees 21. Bitumen 22. Seaweed 23. Venom  
 Down 1. Mercury 2. Greenhouse gas 3. Chain 4. Bins 5. Peat 6. Global warming 7. Meat 12. Acts 14. Blue 15. Tsunami 18. Stove 19. Tusk 20. Seed 21. Beds

### Clues down

- 1 \_ Isles, home territory (7)
- 2 Another name for the tiger that lives in the Russian Far East (4)
- 3 Flatland (5)
- 4 A young tree (7)

## HOW TO ENTER ACTION GIVEAWAYS

Send an email with your name, address and phone number, along with *Grow & Play* or *Beevive* Competition in the subject line, to [competition@wwf.org.uk](mailto:competition@wwf.org.uk). Alternatively, post your entry to **Action Magazine, WWF-UK, Living Planet Centre, Rufford House, Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 4LL.**

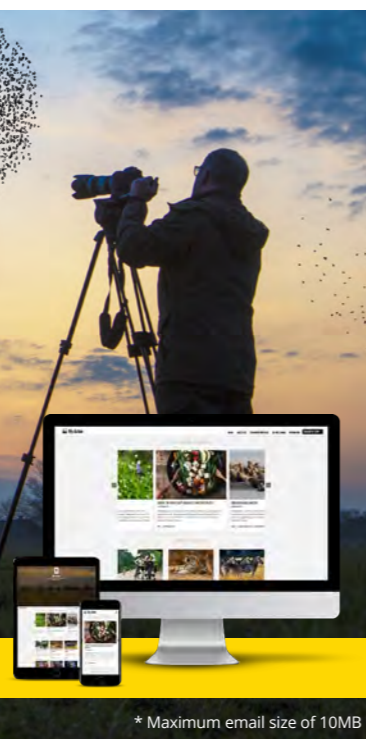
Only one competition per entry. Closing date: Friday 21 July 2023. For full terms and conditions, visit: [www.wwf.org.uk/compters](http://www.wwf.org.uk/compters)

## SHARE YOUR SNAPS

Get outside and capture UK nature on camera – and we'll showcase your best photos on My Action, our members-only website.

Whatever wildlife you love to photograph – on land, in the sea or the air – send your best images to [editor@wwf.org.uk](mailto:editor@wwf.org.uk) by Friday 28 July.\* The 10 best photos will appear online in August.

[www.wwf.org.uk/myaction](http://www.wwf.org.uk/myaction)



\* Maximum email size of 10MB



Valeria tried fresh açai juice made from these local berries: "It was absolutely delicious!"

## FOREST-FRIENDLY FARMING



The road to the Manuripi National Amazon Wildlife Reserve in the Bolivian Amazon is largely unpaved. As we drove from the local town of Cobija, cattle-ranching pastures and deforested areas gave way to lush green forest in the reserve. WWF-Bolivia has been working here with its partners for over a decade, protecting the forest and supporting local communities to build sustainable livelihoods that don't involve felling trees. More recently, we've started to work on jaguar conservation in the region. Jaguars are the largest cats in the Americas, and while they range from Mexico to Argentina, the Amazon is their stronghold – it's home to around 75% of the global population. In 2021, WWF and our local partners installed camera traps at about 50 sites in Manuripi reserve. Jaguars were recorded on many of them, providing further evidence of the importance of protected areas.

### COMMUNITY CROPS

In the reserve, I walked an intricate network of paths that are shared by people and wildlife such as jaguars. And at the heart of the protected area, I visited a processing plant, built with support from WWF, where açai berries are turned into pulp that can be frozen for export. The açai harvest provides an alternative source of income to timber for local people, so it helps to ensure the forest stays standing. The berries can also be picked when the reserve's main non-timber forest product – Brazil nuts – are out of season. Both products are certified, guaranteeing higher quality, which in turn commands a higher price. Part of the profit from that higher price funds the reserve, creating a virtuous cycle of sustainable conservation.

Leaving Manuripi, as we drove past the deforested areas, I reflected on the power of protected areas to keep forests alive. Around 50% of the Amazon is covered by protected areas and Indigenous lands, which are vital for the conservation of this rich biome. In Manuripi, the forest not only provides sustainable livelihoods for people and a safe home for jaguars and other wildlife, but also a service to humanity by helping to regulate the climate and mitigate climate change. Win-wins are rare in conservation, so I'll treasure this inspiring trip for a long time.

Valeria Boron

Senior programme adviser, Latin America



# VISIT



# MY ACTION

## EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

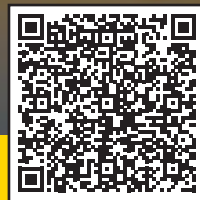
Just for you

- Interviews ● Videos
- Inspiring stories and lots more

Don't forget to **go online** and explore **My Action** to see how you can do more as a **WWF member** and help bring our world back to life

Visit the site to discover ways to **take action** to protect nature, tips for **sustainable living** and the **latest news** on our projects in the UK and around the world

[wwf.org.uk/myaction](https://www.wwf.org.uk/myaction)



FSC logo to go here



For a future where people and nature thrive | [wwf.org.uk](https://www.wwf.org.uk)

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All information correct at time of printing, June 2023