



Action

THE MAGAZINE FOR WWF MEMBERS

SUMMER 2026

Tigers *and us*

How local heroes are giving tigers space to thrive

Get closer *to nature*

From creating a pond to litter picking, get outside and help nature this summer

Where *worlds meet*

How we're helping communities live alongside mountain gorillas



Amazon *rising*

My name is Tâmera Cristi Munduruku. Last November I travelled from my remote community in the Brazilian Amazon to COP30 and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. It wasn't easy to leave my family behind, but I went because my people, our rivers and our forests needed a voice at the world's biggest climate conference.

Not long ago, I began to see Indigenous struggles differently. Everything changed when I joined the Water Defenders Course, created by WWF and partners, with support from Reckitt. Through that training, I learned how deeply our lives depend on our territory, our land and our waters – and how powerful it is when women, young people and Indigenous communities understand their rights and step into decision-making spaces. The course opened my eyes, strengthened my confidence in debating and expanded my advocacy abilities, ultimately helping me speak up at COP30.

At COP, I carried the stories of my people – the Munduruku – who have always defended our land against illegal mining and other destructive projects. I spoke as a woman who has faced prejudice, but also as someone who knows we're capable of leading, protecting and inspiring. WWF's support made this journey possible, with the training, scholarships and encouragement to bring our voices forward.

What I take home is hope: the belief that collective strength, respect for nature and resilience will keep the Amazon alive. And I will continue fighting for our rights, our lands and our future.

Tâmera

Tâmera Cristi Munduruku

Right: Tâmera took to the stage at COP30 to advocate for nature and her community in the Amazon

“MY PEOPLE, OUR RIVERS AND OUR FORESTS NEEDED A VOICE AT THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CLIMATE CONFERENCE”

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Watch Tâmera's video diary as she prepares for her trip to COP30.

<https://youtu.be/DAGaSnXbxAI>



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PEOPLE POWER BIG ISSUES MEMBERSHIP IN ACTION

WWF *in action*

Shared *spaces*

The future's looking brighter for communities and wildlife in an iconic landscape, thanks to our Land for Life project – which was made possible by the support of the British public, matched by a £2 million UK Government grant.

In the grasslands of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, Maasai herders have lived alongside wild animals for generations. But in recent decades, habitats have become degraded, and climate change has brought longer, harsher droughts. Shrinking space and dwindling resources have increased human-wildlife conflict.

We launched the Land for Life project in April 2022, in partnership with African People & Wildlife and the South Rift Association of Land Owners. We worked with local partners to restore habitats, strengthen sustainable livelihoods and support coexistence in 8,890 sq km of community lands.

Today, grazing lands and habitats are in better condition, despite severe drought. Thousands of Maasai women have taken up nature-friendly enterprises like beekeeping and making beadwork jewellery. Predator-proof livestock enclosures have significantly reduced attacks on livestock, which means fewer carnivores are killed in retaliation.

Thanks to your support, local communities now have the opportunities and practical tools they need to manage their land so people and wildlife can thrive together for generations to come.



Right: Having more diverse sources of income, such as jewellery making, eases pressure on grazing lands, and helps families pay school fees and buy essentials

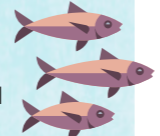
2,483 sq km	42%	84%	82%	6,931
of priority habitat under improved community management	reduction in livestock losses to carnivores while grazing	reduction in retaliatory killings of carnivores	of households use improved livestock and grazing practices	adults supported in wildlife-friendly enterprises

© Greg Armitfield / WWF-UK

News in numbers

2,550+

More than **2,550** fish species have been documented in the **Amazon**, with around two-thirds being unique to the region, as highlighted in our **Forgotten Fishes** report. Dozens of new species are being described each year.



28,857

Our conservation efforts have helped Mongolia's critically **endangered saiga antelope** make an amazing comeback. The national population increased **24%** in just one year. The latest census recorded **28,857** animals.



463,000

Around **463,000** people benefit directly from our **Water Resource Accountability in Pakistan** project, funded by the UK Government. It supports sustainable land and water management and **climate resilience** across three provinces.

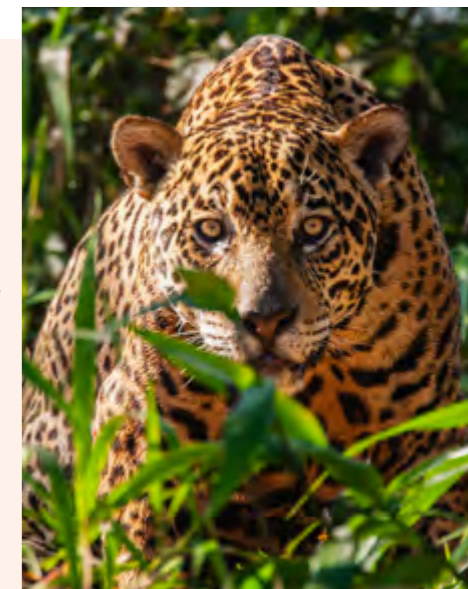


United for jaguars

Latin American countries have launched the first ever regional action plan to save jaguars, marking a major step forward in protecting the largest cat in the western hemisphere.

Jaguars are found across Central and South America, but they're threatened by habitat loss and hunting, and have disappeared from around half their range. We played a key role in bringing together governments from countries where jaguars live to agree a regional conservation roadmap, as well as cooperation to combat threats affecting jaguars.

Jaguars roam across large areas, so regional collaboration is critical to protect key habitats and connecting corridors. As part of the plan, we want to safeguard jaguar landscapes. Conserving and reconnecting these ecosystems benefits countless other species too. And by helping protect jaguar habitats such as the Amazon rainforest, we're also helping fight climate change.



Above: A new action plan to protect jaguars across Latin America will safeguard habitats, support wildlife and help fight climate change

Green shoots

An award-winning community garden is bringing new life to an abandoned street corner in Newport, Wales.

The Gateway Garden, created by designer Emily Crowley-Wroe and community organisation Greening Maindee, won silver at the RHS Malvern show last summer. Its plants and trees were chosen to absorb pollution, reduce flood risk and provide vital new habitat for wildlife in an inner-city area with little other green space.

We supported the project through Nature Neighbourhoods, a partnership with the National Trust and RSPB, funded by the National Lottery and Co-op.

"This garden shows the huge impact community-led organisations can make when given a little bit of support and opportunity," said Izzy McLeod, WWF's Nature Neighbourhoods project officer.

Our wider work in Wales includes the Community Grant Scheme, which has awarded over £82,000 to more than 100 projects since 2021, boosting access to nature, wellbeing and biodiversity.



Above: The Gateway Garden, with its mural by artist Andy O'Rourke, shows the benefits of community-led initiatives

© Getty

© WWF-UK

Tracking *giants*

Our colleagues in Laos, together with government and conservation partners, helped attach a GPS tracking collar to a wild elephant in Nam Poui National Protected Area – a first here.

Tracking data can provide valuable insights into seasonal migration routes and how elephants interact with community areas. Combined with recent DNA analysis, collaring will also help us develop the first science-based estimate of the elephant population in this key landscape.

Only 8,000-11,000 wild Asian elephants remain in China and south-east Asia, making conservation efforts increasingly urgent. Nam Poui is an important elephant stronghold, also supporting other threatened species including sun bears, clouded leopards and white-handed gibbons.

“This achievement in Nam Poui reflects WWF’s long-term commitment to securing a future for elephants in Laos,” said Dr Akchousanh Rasphone, our conservation director in Laos. “We aim to build on this effort and ensure the elephant-collaring data is translated into meaningful conservation outcomes for Asian elephants.”



© WWF-Laos

WE’RE COMMITTED TO SECURING A FUTURE FOR ELEPHANTS

Above: The GPS collar will provide insights into the movements and behaviour of wild Asian elephants, helping guide our conservation efforts

Team *elly*

Conflict between people and elephants in Tanzania has reduced dramatically over the last three years, thanks to your support and funding from the UK Government’s Darwin Initiative.

Elephants eating and trampling crops are a real concern for communities in the Ruvuma landscape, which has one of the largest elephant populations in east Africa. Now, teams of village game scouts assist communities when elephants and other wild animals are near, leading to a big drop in crop losses and accidents.

In a traditionally male-dominated field, women have also been trained as game scouts. They play an important role in engaging with communities and de-escalating potential conflicts.



© Japhary Kiwanja / WWF-Tanzania

Right: Thanks to your support, we’ve trained game scouts in Tanzania to help communities prevent conflict with elephants, reducing crop losses and accidents

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thriving *together*

A new initiative in Africa’s Greater Virunga Landscape – home to rare mountain gorillas – is aiming to reduce the risk of disease transmission between people and wildlife as interaction increases. Our WWF colleagues in Uganda helped launch the ‘One Health’ approach, which recognises that the

health of people, animals and the environment are closely connected. This partnership project will help communities and institutions detect and respond to potential threats.



Earth Hour *countdown*

Thousands of parkrunners donned leopard print, panda ears and other animal-themed outfits on 28 March for a special ‘Wear it Wild’ 5k celebrating 20 years of Earth Hour. WWF took over every parkrun throughout the country, with 26 special events across Forestry England locations.

The Saturday morning run marked the start of a 12-hour countdown to the 8.30pm global lights-off moment when landmarks go dark in solidarity with our natural world. We encouraged people to switch off in their own way and spend time connecting with nature to support their wellbeing.

Conservation *successes*

Elephant and rhino numbers are rising in Kenya, according to the National Wildlife Census 2025. African elephants increased from 36,280 in 2021 to 42,072 in 2025, while black and white rhino numbers grew from 1,812 to 2,102. These gains reflect strong efforts to prevent poaching, protect habitats and support communities living alongside wildlife. Meanwhile, the lion population remained steady at 2,512, highlighting the ongoing need to help people and predators coexist. Rare hirola antelope and African wild dog numbers remain critically low – but sightings of marine turtles have increased along the coast.

© Adobe-Stock

A *lasting* impact

As a child, Petrina’s love of nature was shaped by her parents and walks with her father. She spent afternoons playing in a local wood with her brother and later walking friends’ dogs in London’s Richmond Park. Her affection for wildlife continued as an adult with her husband, surrounded by a lively household of cats, rabbits and ferrets.

In the 1990s, Petrina began taking part in our sponsored walks, guided by rangers who helped participants discover nature. One memorable rhino-themed walk lasted nine hours in torrential rain after landslides forced

detours – “but the rhinos were worth it,” Petrina recalls. The events gave a sense of achievement and cemented her commitment to WWF.

Later, Petrina and her husband chose to continue that support through gifts in their wills. “WWF has always had a place in my heart,” she says. “What better way to protect wildlife than by remembering WWF in our wills?” Legacy events reassure Petrina that her support will make a lasting difference, giving a sense of connection each year.

Contact us
For more information about leaving a gift in your will, contact **Grace on 01483 412153** or email grace@wwf.org.uk



Above: Petrina has left a gift to WWF in her will to help us protect wildlife for future generations

Tiger conservation is fragile. Poaching, habitat loss and conflict with people continue to threaten the cats' future. Protecting them means supporting communities to safely coexist alongside these apex predators



Tiger *guardians*

Across India and Nepal's Terai Arc, tiger numbers are rising. So we're working alongside communities to help people and big cats thrive together in this vital landscape

Sixteen years ago, a gasp of dismay echoed around the world when a global census revealed as few as 3,200 tigers surviving in the wild. They were clinging on in less than a tenth of their historic range.

It seemed rampant poaching was pushing the species towards the unthinkable: extinction in the wild.

Fast-forward to 2026, and conservationists await this summer's new figures with cautious optimism. Four years ago, India alone estimated there to be 3,682 tigers – more than the entire global population at that historic low point – while Nepal's numbers had almost trebled since 2009 to an estimated 355. For people who supported tiger conservation through the darkest years, the relief was immense. The question now is whether this recovery can continue.

Your membership supports our work in a remarkable broad band of habitat spanning India and Nepal – from the forested Himalayan foothills to the fertile Gangetic plain. Known as the Terai Arc Landscape, it's a region of huge importance for threatened wildlife including tigers, greater one-horned rhinos and Asian elephants.

Stretching across more than 800km, the Terai Arc links a chain of protected areas through a mosaic of forest corridors, farmland and villages. They're places where people live and work, but which tigers also depend on to find food and mates.

These corridors have long been shared spaces where people and wildlife regularly cross paths, but the increasing overlap and habitat loss make coexistence both essential and complex.

Poaching also remains a big threat. As long as tigers are valued for profit, illegal trade in their body parts will continue to drive demand. But India and Nepal have fought back. Many local communities now act as the eyes and ears of conservation, alerting authorities to suspicious activity and working as rangers. These tiger guardians are being equipped with more sophisticated technology than ever, supported by stronger customs controls and international efforts to disrupt illegal markets in countries such as Vietnam and China, and firm government backing. Thanks to these efforts, we're in a stronger position to combat poaching.

NEW CHALLENGES

As tiger numbers grow, there are other threats. The Terai Arc is three times the size of Wales – seemingly ample space for tigers. But it also supports a human population 20 times larger. The challenge is stark: how do people and tigers coexist in such a crowded landscape?

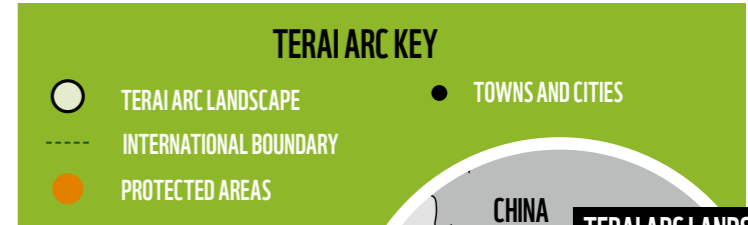
The risks become clear in the tall, dense vegetation where tigers hunt, unseen and unheard – places no person would willingly enter, except that many must. Because these fields are their workplaces. As Shreya Sethi, our coordinator of conservation social science ►



“AS TIGER HABITATS AND HUMAN ACTIVITIES INCREASINGLY OVERLAP, THE LIKELIHOOD OF CONFLICT GROWS”



Below: These two images were taken by the same camera trap in the Terai Arc's Khata Corridor – a vital route for tigers between protected areas. The photos show just how closely this landscape is shared by communities and big cats, with the same paths being followed



in India, explains: “Tigers are increasingly using agricultural land as an extension of their habitat.” Sugar cane plantations are expanding, creating dense, year-round cover that mimics the tall grasslands tigers naturally use. Prey species such as wild boar and hog deer shelter there, attracting hunting tigers. “The wild forests and grasslands become agricultural land – and wildlife can’t tell the difference,” says Shreya. “For farmers entering sugar cane to tend their crops, there’s no way of knowing if a tiger is near.”

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
As tiger habitats and human activities increasingly overlap, the likelihood of conflict grows. The region’s protected areas and their buffer zones have spaces between them where wildlife can move (‘corridors’), but these are under strain. Expanding agriculture, industry and human settlements, along with new roads and railways, create barriers and fragmented habitats. As tiger numbers grow, the animals disperse through these corridors in search of territory, food and mates, bringing them into closer contact with people.

Smriti Dahal is a human-wildlife conflict management and coexistence lead at WWF’s Tigers Alive Initiative. She works in tiger conservation, yet her daily focus is people. “My work is about communities, understanding what it means for people to live with wildlife almost in their backyard every day,” Smriti explains. Shreya and Smriti’s social science expertise is essential to the future of tigers and the people who share their landscapes. Both emphasise the importance of traditional beliefs that have long supported coexistence with big animals, whether they’re tigers or elephants. “Some communities worship a forest goddess believed to protect them when they gather firewood,” says Shreya. Smriti adds that even when livestock is killed by predators, people often show remarkable restraint: “Seeing wildlife as part of daily life, even worshipping them, plays a big role in their tolerance.” But these cultural foundations are shifting as younger people leave Uttar Pradesh, India and Nepal in search of work. New people move into areas and are unfamiliar with local customs. Shreya warns of potential

Above: Wild tigers are increasingly using sugar cane fields as cover, moving through tall crops to hunt and rest close to villages. Understanding how they navigate these shared spaces helps reduce conflict



tipping points where communities could turn against tigers – with devastating consequences for all. Smriti is clear: “Conflict will always exist where people and wildlife share space. Coexistence depends on people having the resilience and support to cope with that conflict. They need systems they trust, benefits they can see, and confidence that their concerns are heard.”

TEAM TIGER
One of the most effective responses has come from within local communities.

Bagh Mitras, meaning tiger friends, are volunteers from villages in India, trained by WWF to act as rapid response teams. Whenever a tiger enters farmland or moves close to settlements, they attend the scene to help keep people safe and track the animal’s movements. We’re currently developing an app that enables the Bagh Mitras to notify the forest department about incidents in real time. In the event of livestock loss or human injury, they support families, helping them complete the paperwork to access compensation schemes. Their presence in the community builds trust, reduces fear and helps maintain tolerance of tigers at moments of high tension. ▶

TERAI ARC LANDSCAPE

The green areas in the maps above show tiger country – a belt between India and Nepal that’s three times the size of Wales. The larger map gives us a graphic representation of the challenges before us. You can see the major protected areas in orange, providing both habitat and a safe space for these big cats. But the greatest danger lies in between protected areas – those wildlife corridors that allow the animals to move between protected zones, risking conflict with people. And just look at the dozens of dots, each representing a town or city.

Images: © Getty | © Nikhil Pal | © WWF-Nepal | Map illustration: Julia Young



WE'VE TRAINED LOCAL VOLUNTEERS TO ACT AS RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS



When a farmer reports a possible tiger paw print on his land in India's Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, a Bagh Mitra team is quick to respond. These trained volunteers play a vital role in easing tensions where people and tigers share the same landscape



Above: Milk vendors from Ranbodi village share their daily route with tigers. In this encounter, the vendors stayed calm and kept a safe distance and the tiger ignored them. Living alongside tigers brings daily risks and requires constant adaptation

Living with tigers

Manju Devi and her husband farm paddy fields within Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in the Terai Arc Landscape (see map on p11). It was fear for her husband, who often works alone in the fields, that persuaded her to become one of the first women to volunteer as a Bagh Mitra. "During training, we learned how to apply awareness and safety measures to help protect farmers like my husband," she says.

Manju recalls the day a tiger entered their fields and tensions rose among local villagers. She used her conflict-resolution skills to calm the situation. "My husband was worried about me because it can be difficult to face a crowd. But I managed to pull it off. I convinced people to stay away from the crop field until it was safe to return."



Below: Manju Devi was one of the first women to join the Bagh Mitras, trained and equipped to respond to tiger encounters and help keep people safe

In Nepal, rapid response teams perform a similar role to the Bagh Mitras in India, and local community groups are raising awareness on how to reduce the risks when going into the forests for daily needs – avoiding entering the forests at dawn or dusk when tigers are hunting, for instance.

Alongside this, in India's Terai Arc we work with partners to offer livestock insurance schemes. This has supported over 500 families to insure more than 1,000 cattle through government schemes. These steps help households recover more easily and reduce the likelihood of retaliation against big cats.

SCALING UP FOR THE FUTURE

Local action is vital in a rapidly changing human environment, but so too is a wider, coordinated approach. Across the Terai Arc, a growing set of solutions is helping communities stay safe,

protect their livelihoods and reduce the risk of conflict. Some of these measures focus on preventing encounters in the first place, while others support people after an incident, or help authorities identify where tensions are rising.

Technology is now playing an increasingly important role. In India, we're using an artificial intelligence model to interrogate more than 85,000 news reports about human-wildlife conflict, identifying patterns of retaliation and escalation. Solar lighting is being installed in off-grid villages to help communities spot wild animals such as tigers, leopards and elephants from a distance, and avoid dangerous interactions through unexpected encounters.

Drones equipped with heat-sensing cameras can be used to scan sugar cane plantations for tigers where visibility is low. Meanwhile, livestock enclosures have reduced losses to

predators and we're helping people access specialist support if they're experiencing trauma after dangerous encounters.

Smriti believes the next step is scale: "We need to think bigger. There are many promising initiatives, but they're happening in pockets at pilot sites. We need to capture what works, expand it and make it sustainable through long-term financing. We need communities that have strong relationships with tigers, conservation organisations that understand local realities, and sustainable government support. That's what we're working towards over the coming years."

The Terai Arc is changing fast – and so are the lives of the people who call it home. Humans have created many of the pressures that tigers now face, but with the right support, we can also be the ones who secure the species' future. ■

Tiger friends

Will you help support the teams who play a vital role in keeping people and tigers safe? Here's how your donation could help:

£20 could go towards field gear for the Bagh Mitras to aid their efforts in tackling human-wildlife conflict

£30 could support alert systems to notify people if a tiger is nearby, so they can take precautions

£50 could support the production of manuals and other materials to help raise awareness of what people can do to reduce their risk

£100 could enable us to help a tiger reserve develop a strategy to reduce the risks to local people

You can donate using the enclosed freepost envelope or by scanning this QR code



Donate today at www.org.uk/tiger-friends

A wild heart *in the city*

Londoner **Nadeem Perera** is a TV wildlife presenter, WWF supporter and lifelong birdwatcher. He talks woodpeckers, wide open spaces and why just stepping outside can bring you a sense of wonder

Where did birdwatching begin for you?

Growing up in an east London tower block, in that quintessentially urban space, there were pigeons nesting on our balcony and they had eggs. This was life in close proximity when I was just three or four years old. My interest in nature has always been there, because nature has always been there.

Was there a life-changing moment?

You could say I had a colourful relationship with the education system and, at 15, I was sitting on a bench in a graveyard when I should have been at school. A green woodpecker landed

in front of me and I was just so taken aback by its beauty – the bright green feathers, the red cap, the striking black mask. It came at a time where I thought beautiful things wouldn't happen to me. I realised there are beautiful things out here. They don't cost anything, they don't ask anything of me and they're on my doorstep. So I really prioritise going out and seeking those beautiful experiences.

What's the best way for young people to engage with nature?

Go outside. Just go outside. Whether you live in the most rural, coastal part of Cornwall, or bang in the middle of industrial east London. I promise you, if you step out of your house and walk for 10 minutes, you'll see wildlife, whether that's a bird, an insect or a rat. You'll see an animal interacting with its environment and therein lies the wonder of life – and huge perspective.

What's your favourite bird?

The carrion crow. It's smart, it's black and it gets a bad rep it doesn't deserve. What's not to like?

And your own special place for nature?

Richmond Park in London, the home of my transformation as a young adult. It came at a time when I needed thinking space. I looked on the map and saw this



Above: Nadeem and Ollie Olanipekun (right) set up Flock Together in 2020 as a way of connecting more under-represented people with wildlife and the natural world

Left: Nadeem is now sharing his passion for birdwatching with children through his new book

Below: Nadeem's life changed when he saw a green woodpecker. Its beauty inspired him to seek out other beautiful things

massive open space. It was a place where I didn't feel I was in London, and I didn't feel I had to justify myself against pressures other people were putting on me. It was total freedom and liberation for me to move and walk, as well as think. It still is the place where I feel most at home.

How can we help more people feel connected to wildlife?

To speak to people you need to understand their language. And to do that you have to have lived in, or had close proximity to, their culture. You have to let people who are native in that tongue into the building, into the decision-making. That's the role I feel I play at the moment.

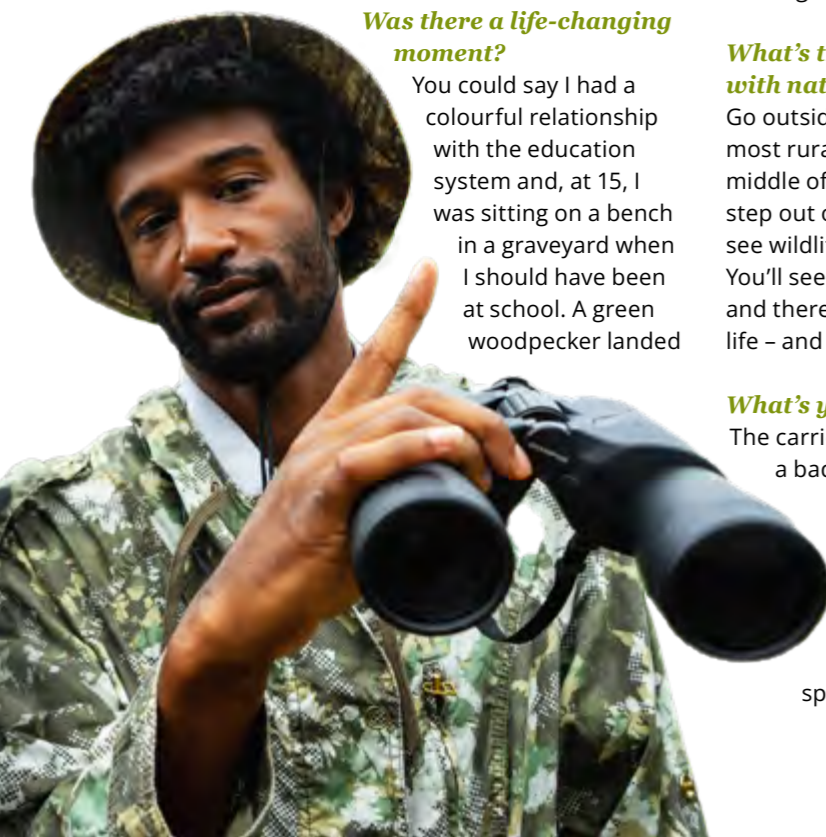
What inspired you to create a global outdoors movement for people of colour?

I met Ollie Olanipekun who said he had an idea for creating a birdwatching club for black and brown people. That's where Flock Together began. We have chapters all over the world now – Tokyo, Toronto, New York. It's still growing.

Tell us about your new book for children

A huge motivation was that I was a kid from an estate who just had an interest in wildlife. Now, with the experience and knowledge I've gained over the years, I've written *What Makes A Bird?* It's a mix of interactive exercises that get kids outside and engaged, and information that they can take on, show off and probably use to teach their parents a thing or two about birds. ■

WIN!
A copy of *What Makes A Bird?*
We're giving away a signed copy of Nadeem's *What Makes A Bird?*
For your chance to win see the 'How to enter' box on page 30.



Running wild

One of Africa's rarest predators is fighting for survival - and WWF is helping it hold out.

African wild dogs are remarkable, elusive and highly social, living in cooperative packs. Once widespread, they now survive in only a few strongholds, threatened by shrinking habitat, diseases spread from domestic dogs and conflict with people.

But there is hope. In Tanzania, we're working with communities to protect and restore wildlife corridors so packs can move and breed freely. And we're helping strengthen anti-poaching efforts to allow prey populations to recover. Conservationists are also vaccinating domestic dogs and helping farmers protect livestock without harming wildlife.

For now, white-tipped tails still flash in the grass - proof that, by working together, we can still secure the wild dog's future.



A life with gorillas
 Watch *A Gorilla Story: Told by David Attenborough* on Netflix, following a remarkable gorilla group in Rwanda

The heart of the family
 A mountain gorilla rests, her one-month-old infant tucked tightly to her chest. At birth, infants weigh just 1.4-1.8kg and depend entirely on their mothers. With females giving birth only once every three to five years, each infant carries the future of the subspecies. IGCP supports ranger teams who safeguard these families daily. Watching this pair, I felt the fierce tenderness that keeps hope alive.



The big gorilla count begins
 I was able to join the second sweep of the Bwindi-Sarambwe ecosystem census. Rangers guided me through the forest, searching for signs – broken stems, crushed leaves, anything that hints at where a gorilla family slept. At last, there it was: a fresh nest, rain pooled in its centre, a dung pile still holding the warm, musky scent of the night before. The aim is to survey the whole landscape, mapping gorilla movements, collecting samples and building the data that roots conservation action in evidence.



Clues in the code
 Gloves on, masks tight, the team began. Dung samples were collected, labelled, sealed and, later, sent for DNA analysis. Each vial held the genetic fingerprint of a gorilla we may never see. These samples build a map of the population – identifying individuals, confirming family groups and tracking them. This data helps IGCP and its partners monitor long-term population trends and guide protection efforts. Every sample is a step toward understanding and safeguarding mountain gorillas.

MEMBERSHIP IN ACTION **10** MINS READ TIME

Two worlds collide

Wildlife photographer Jasper Doest discovers how we're helping people and mountain gorillas coexist in east Africa's misty mountains

Once on the brink of extinction, the mountain gorilla has become one of conservation's rare success stories. Today, an estimated 1,063 individuals live in two isolated groups – one in Virunga volcanoes, spanning the borders of Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and one in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, connected with DRC's Sarambwe Nature Reserve. But numbers can't show what that recovery looks like on the ground. I travelled to Bwindi to understand coexistence not in statistics, but in the lives of the people and gorillas who depend on these mountains. The journey there revealed how closely human life presses against the forest. Patches of farmland cut into steep slopes, villages sitting at the edge of the trees. A few steps can take you from a tea plantation into forest, from the rhythms of village life into mountain gorilla territory. This is where coexistence is tested daily, the worlds of farmers and gorillas shaping the other's future.

Bwindi is home to nearly half the world's remaining mountain gorillas,



and protecting them requires collaboration across borders. WWF works through the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), a coalition with Conservation International and Fauna & Flora, working with local communities and national protected area authorities in all three range countries. They support long-term monitoring, strengthen ranger capacity, reduce conflict with wildlife and help communities benefit from conservation through tourism, livelihood projects and shared decision-making. In the voices of the people I met, I could hear the sound of ownership, of people shaping their own future. Standing on the edge of Bwindi, I felt awe and unease. The forest breathes like an ancient body, but its future depends on choices made in villages along its borders. Survival is not one story but many, braided through soil and the quiet breath of gorillas in the mist. ▶

Clean water, safe forests

Clean water changes everything for communities living near Bwindi. Some families walk up to 10km to fetch water. IGCP installs rainwater-harvesting tanks like this one, reducing the need for people to travel long distances or enter the forest in search of water. Fewer trips into gorilla habitat reduce the chances of disease transmission or conflict, so this benefits people and wildlife.



A quiet legacy

A gorilla named Rafiki Junior rests under the watchful eye of silverback Rwamutwe. His father, Rafiki, was a legendary silverback whose accidental death from a poacher's spear shook this community. Five years on, seeing his son felt like witnessing the forest breathe again. Trackers follow this family daily, monitoring their health and safety. In Rafiki Junior's steady gaze, the legacy of his father lives on.

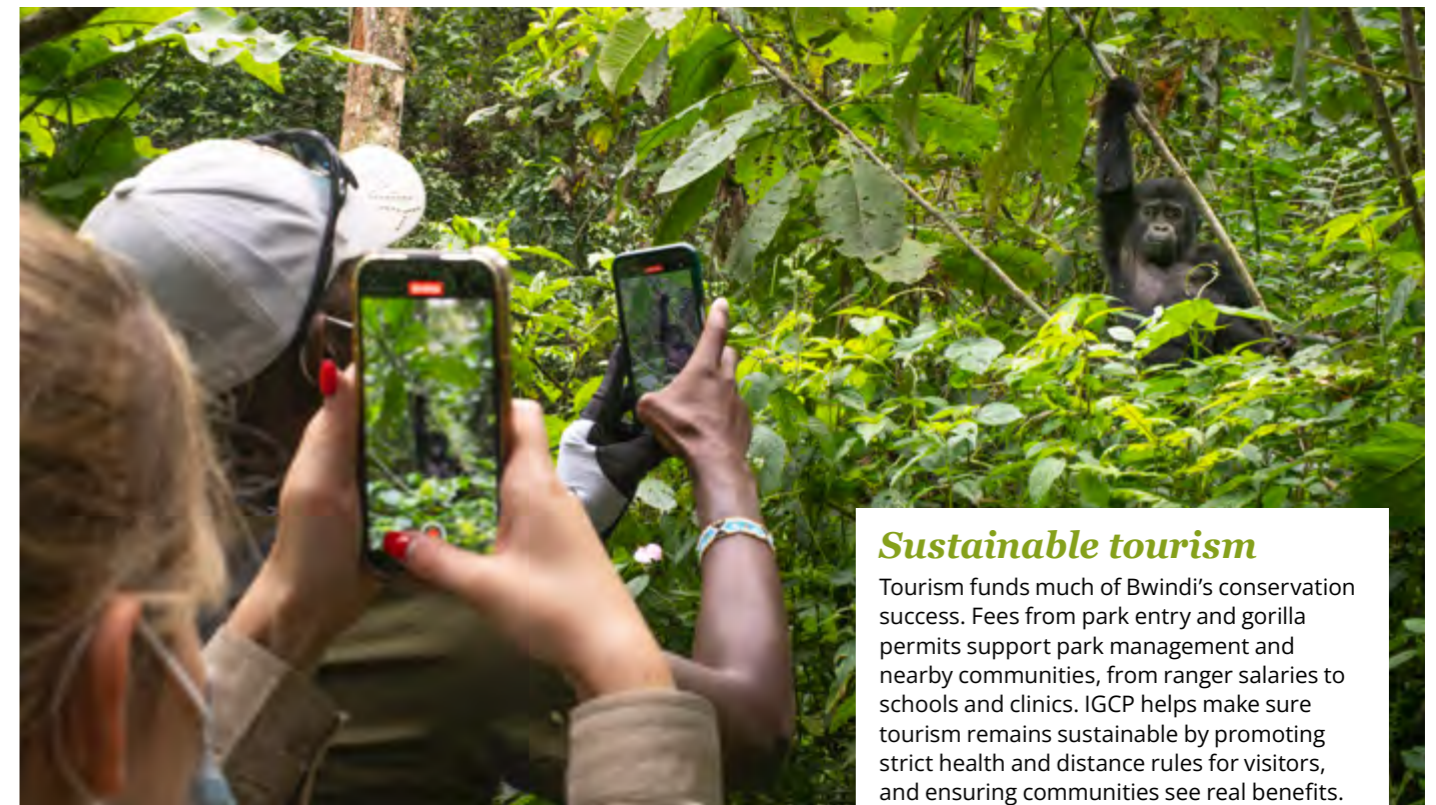
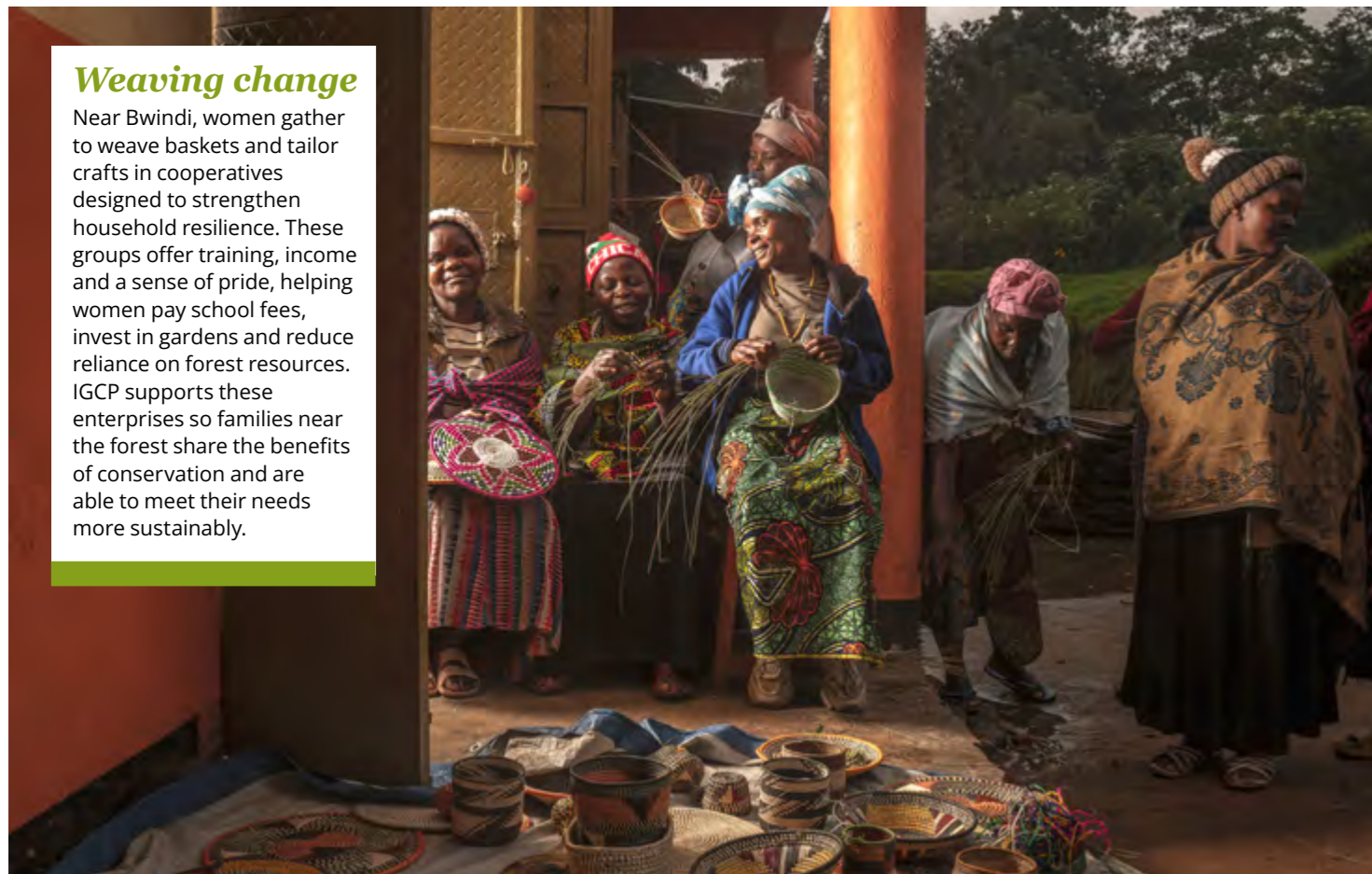


Boundary keepers

Human-gorilla conflict resolution teams – known as HuGos – are community volunteers who guide wildlife back into the forest when animals stray into farmland. This can happen several times a week. In addition to physical buffer zones like tea plantations, these everyday heroes protect crops, reduce tension and help keep people and gorillas safe. IGCP helped establish and train teams, strengthening the front line of coexistence.

Weaving change

Near Bwindi, women gather to weave baskets and tailor crafts in cooperatives designed to strengthen household resilience. These groups offer training, income and a sense of pride, helping women pay school fees, invest in gardens and reduce reliance on forest resources. IGCP supports these enterprises so families near the forest share the benefits of conservation and are able to meet their needs more sustainably.





Sustainable tourism

Tourism funds much of Bwindi's conservation success. Fees from park entry and gorilla permits support park management and nearby communities, from ranger salaries to schools and clinics. IGCP helps make sure tourism remains sustainable by promoting strict health and distance rules for visitors, and ensuring communities see real benefits.

How to...

Amazing ideas for bringing our world back to life

 LIVE GREEN  TOP TIPS

 EXPERT INFO



Keep your community tidy

Step outside for some fresh air while also protecting wildlife this summer

Litter is an ongoing problem across streets, parks and beaches in the UK, costing millions each year to clean up. It's not just messy to look at – it can be dangerous for people and wildlife. A discarded bottle, disposable vape or crisp packet may seem insignificant, but each one adds to a growing global issue.

Wind and rain wash litter into drains, streams and rivers, which carry it to local waterways or eventually out to sea, where it harms marine animals and damages ocean habitats.

Cutting down on the waste we create (and putting it in the right bin) is vital, but litter picking is another brilliant way to help. Grab some sturdy gloves or a litter picker, plus a bag or bucket, and head outside. Sort and recycle what you can when you're done. Whether you spend 20 minutes tidying your street or join a beach clean-up, every bit you collect helps create a cleaner, greener world for everyone.

© Getty

Spot a dominant male orangutan

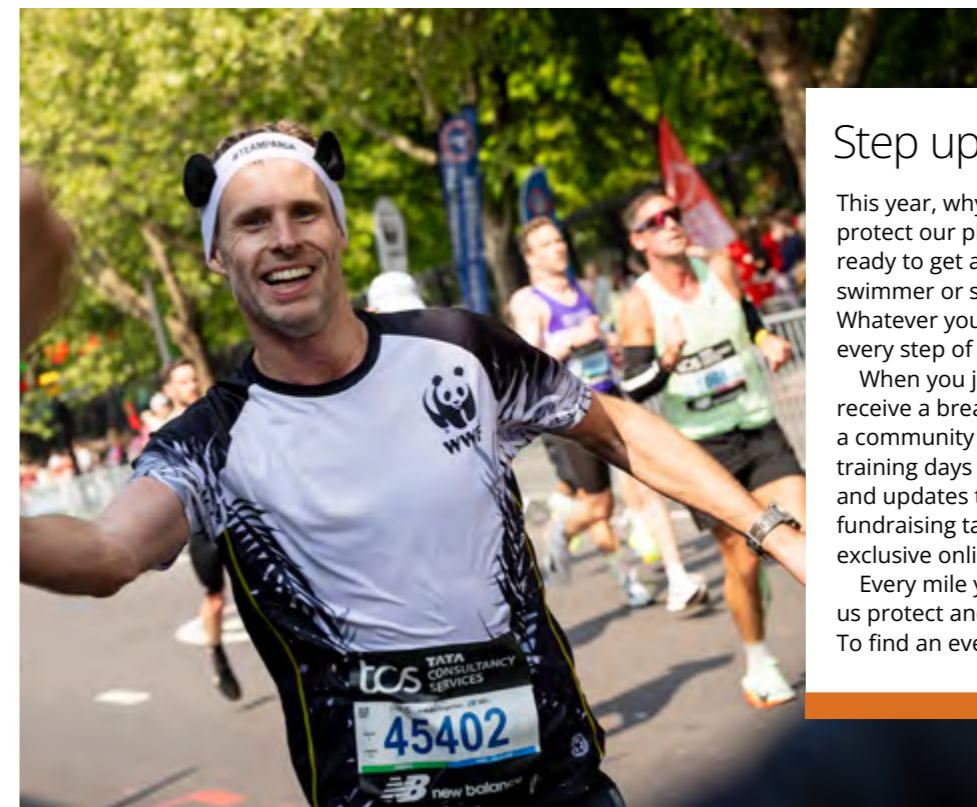
Some male orangutans produce more testosterone than others, triggering big changes in their appearance and behaviour. Here's what makes them stand out...

- 1 As they mature, some male orangutans undergo a striking transformation, developing large cheek pads known as flanges. These impressive facial features signal strength, status and reproductive maturity in the wild.
- 2 Flanged males also develop big throat sacs that work like built-in amplifiers, sending their booming calls across long distances in the dense forest. These 'long calls' help attract females and warn rival males to stay away without needing physical conflict.
- 3 Their heavier, more muscular bodies enable them to move easily along the forest floor, while lighter, unflanged males prefer to travel through the canopy.
- 4 Flanged males are the true lone wanderers of the forest. When two flanged males meet, it can lead to tense stand-offs, particularly if their home ranges overlap or a female is nearby.



Above: When a male orangutan becomes dominant, hormones trigger physical and behavioural changes. **Right:** Donna Simon is our orangutan conservation manager in Malaysia

© Getty | © WWF/Malaysia



Step up *for wildlife*

This year, why not take on a challenge and help protect our planet? We're looking for supporters ready to get active – whether you're a runner, trekker, swimmer or simply keen to try something new. Whatever your challenge, our team will support you every step of the way.

When you join the race to save our world, you'll receive a breathable WWF sports top and access to a community of fundraisers. You can take part in training days at our Living Planet Centre, plus get tips and updates to help you. You'll also benefit from a fundraising target, practical guidance and entry to our exclusive online training hub and Facebook group.

Every mile you cover and pound you raise will help us protect and restore nature around the world. To find an event near you, visit wwf.org.uk/events

Left: Take on a challenge this year and every mile you complete will help our vital conservation work around the world

© Tristan Fewings

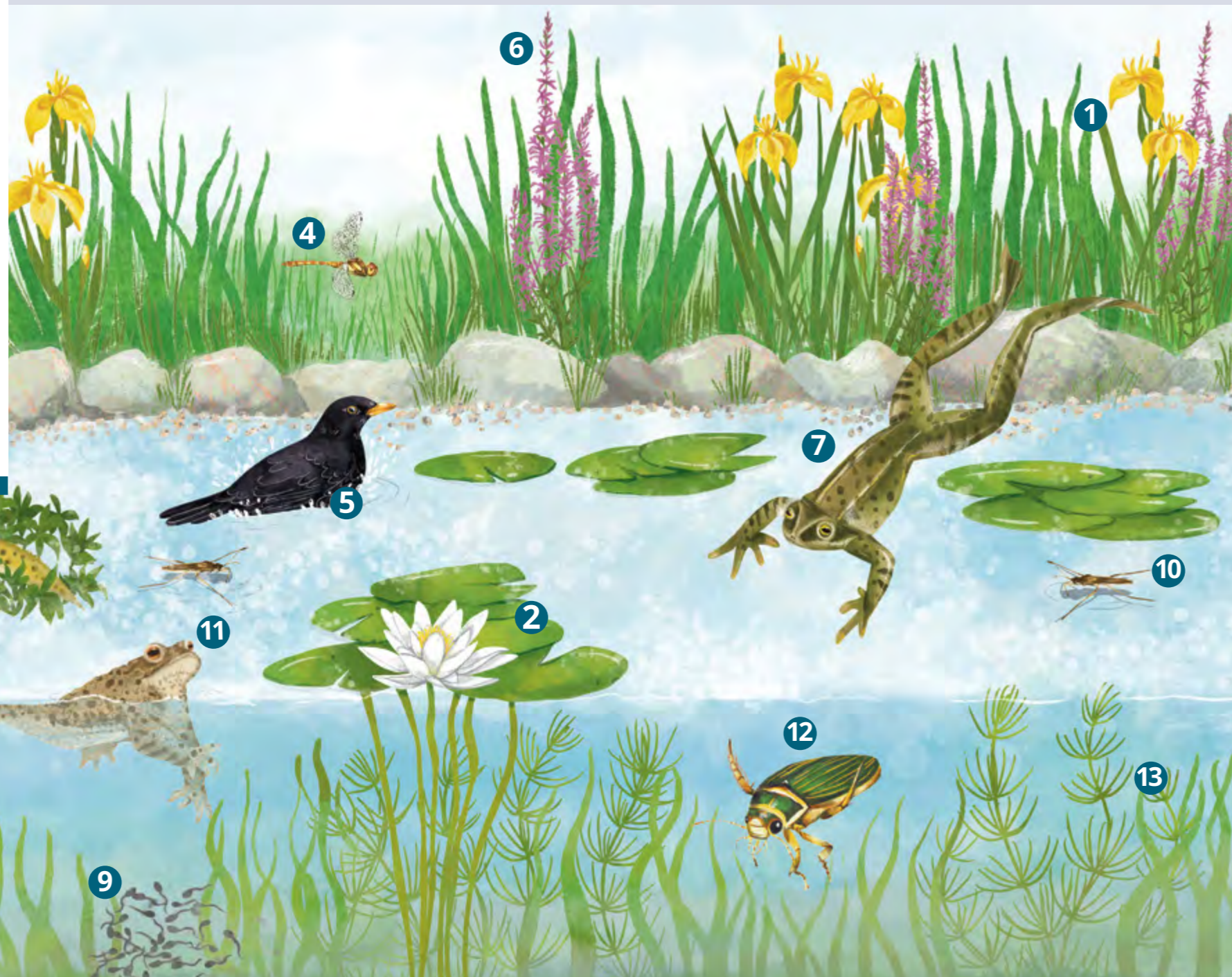
Make a pond to attract wildlife

Ponds are havens for wildlife, offering places to feed, drink, breed and shelter. They also cool the surrounding air, helping birds, mammals and other animals cope with heat and drought in summer.

Building a pond is simpler than you might think. Choose a sunny or lightly shaded spot, dig a shallow hole with gently sloping sides and line it with a wildlife-friendly pond liner. Add a layer of clean gravel, plus a mix of native plants and fill it with collected rainwater, letting it settle naturally.

A third of all UK ponds have disappeared in the past 50 years, yet garden ponds support around two thirds of our freshwater species. Even a small container pond can make a big difference, providing a refuge that boosts biodiversity.

Let's meet some of the wildlife that will help your pond come alive.



1. Yellow flag iris

These flowers thrive in shallow water and can grow up to a metre tall. Their dense root systems help stabilise pond edges, while their tall, sword-like leaves offer shelter and resting spots for visiting insects.

2. White water lily

Floating on the surface, the white water lily is one of our largest native flowers, reaching up to 20cm across. Its broad, leathery leaves give frogs a shady place to rest and hide from predators.

3. Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are strong swimmers, but they need a gently sloping edge or a few submerged logs arranged like a ramp to help them climb in and out safely while they drink or forage for insects.

4. Common darter

Look for this agile, red, narrow-bodied dragonfly hovering above the water in search of prey. After catching insects mid-air, it often retreats to a sunny perch nearby to feed.

5. Blackbird

Ponds are magnets for garden birds. Species such as blackbirds, robins and finches visit shallow margins to drink, hunt for insects and bathe, which helps them cool down and keeps their feathers clean and free from parasites.

6. Purple loosestrife

Growing tall along the pond edge, these vivid magenta flower spikes provide nectar for insects such as brimstone butterflies and elephant hawk moths. Their sturdy stems also offer perches for emerging dragonflies and damselflies.

7. Common frog

Frogs rely on ponds for breeding. A single female can lay up to 4,000 eggs in spring. Tadpoles develop in the water then move onto the land as tiny froglets, spending their days hidden under logs and among long grass.



8. Common newt

These amphibians are mostly active at night, but in spring and summer you may glimpse males' colourful tails when they come up for air. They need soft, submerged plants when breeding as they wrap their eggs in the leaves.

9. Common frog tadpoles

Clumps of frogspawn on the surface take around three weeks to hatch. As they grow, tadpoles graze on algae, helping to clean pond water until they develop into froglets.



10. Common pond skater

Only about 1.5cm long, pond skaters seem to glide effortlessly across the water's surface. Water-repellent hairs on their feet let them 'walk' on the surface film, detecting tiny vibrations to locate unsuspecting prey.

11. Common toad

Olive-brown toads make dramatic journeys to their breeding ponds each spring. They lay their spawn in long, winding strings, and their tadpoles contain mild toxins that help protect them from predators.

12. Great diving beetle

These powerful beetles are fierce, agile hunters, patrolling the water in search of invertebrates, tadpoles and even small fish. Their larvae are equally formidable, armed with strong jaws for catching prey.

13. Hornwort

This must-have oxygenating plant has feathery, dark green whorls along its stems. It helps keep pond water healthy and provides cover for fish, newts and other wildlife.



This page: We're celebrating five years of working in the Guaviare jaguar corridor to protect the big cats, restore the forest and support local communities

Opposite: Community member Raul Tolosa shows off an image of a jaguar from a camera trap in Guaviare



Where jaguars *prowl*

In the forests of Colombia, people and jaguars are learning to live side by side. And community-led work that you support is transforming fear into pride

Deep in the forests of Guaviare, Colombia, the Americas' biggest cat is on the prowl. The evidence is there in black and white: a large male jaguar padding through the forest, paw raised, eyes blazing in the flash of a camera trap.

"I feel proud," says Carlos Rojas. "Here on my own farm, I've captured jaguars on camera almost every year." Carlos is a farmer from Laguna Damas del Nare village, at the heart of Guaviare Department. He's one of many local people participating in a groundbreaking initiative to help his community live alongside jaguars, which should also help secure a future for the big cat and protect the region's threatened wildlife.

Jaguars have always been part of life in Guaviare. But in recent years, things have become harder for them. Cattle ranching has driven the destruction of the Colombian Amazon over the last four decades. Deforestation reached a record high of 219,973 hectares in 2017, up 23% from the previous year.

The Guaviare jaguar corridor covers 496,000 hectares of forests, savannah and wetlands at the centre of Colombia – that's equivalent in size to Cornwall and Berkshire combined. People in this prolifically biodiverse region have always obtained protein from the forest. But deforestation has seen hunting intensify and a decline in populations of species such as pig-like tapirs and peccaries and rabbit-like agoutis, creating problems for their predators.

"Soon there were five, six, seven neighbours, with five, six, seven shotguns, all hunting in the same area," explains community member Yefer Toloza. "They were reducing the prey the jaguar needs to feed on."

CHANGING MINDS AND HEARTS

In 2021, we started working in the Guaviare jaguar corridor. Our aim was to protect big cats by engaging directly with the community along this important wildlife corridor, promoting the value of biodiversity and helping people live more sustainably alongside wildlife. In the process, we hoped to change perceptions of jaguars, which had long inspired fear and superstition. Indeed, traditional belief in the Guaviare region once held that the big cats preyed on pregnant women.

The first step was to increase awareness. To this end, a team of 'rural promoters' spoke to their communities about how important jaguars are to a healthy natural environment. In short, where there are jaguars, there is forest, water and life; where they disappear, you can expect problems. "You don't take care of what you don't know," says Claudia Duarte, coordinator of the rural promoters and herself a resident of this community. "When we discover what we have and understand its value, we take ownership and protect it."

The next step was to empower the community to take over the governance of their own territory. "Until now, decisions have always been made by other people," explains ▶



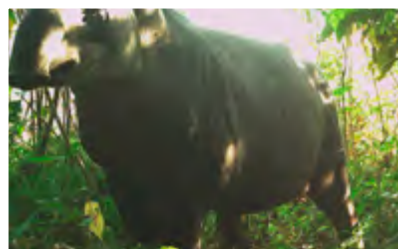
Caught on camera



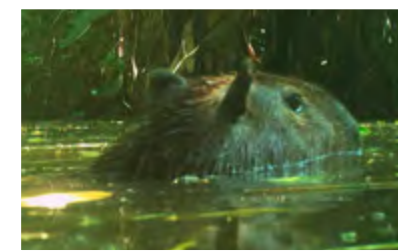
Camera traps reveal the rich wildlife that depends on the Guaviare corridor



Above: The brown capuchin monkey is one of 41 primate species found in Colombia. It has an omnivorous diet and has been recorded using stones as tools to crack nuts. Though primarily arboreal, it might also forage on the ground



Above: The lowland tapir is South America's largest land mammal, weighing up to 320kg. It uses its mobile nose to feed on a variety of plant matter and is an important rainforest seed disperser. Tapirs sometimes fall prey to jaguars



Above: The capybara is the world's largest rodent, weighing up to 60kg, and is an important prey species for jaguars. It has partially webbed feet and is adapted for a semi-aquatic existence, grazing on both grass and aquatic plants



“WE’RE HELPING FAMILIES LEARN IT’S POSSIBLE TO LIVE BOTH FROM NATURE AND WITH NATURE”

Claudia. “Today we’re part of the governance strategy. As a community, we’ve learnt that we can make decisions about our own territory.”

Next, to increase the community’s understanding of jaguars, local people were invited to participate fully in the monitoring process. Working closely with WWF, they’ve now helped carry out monitoring in the Guaviare jaguar corridor for the past four years in a row, with around 60 cameras set each year in key locations across the corridor, many on farmers’ private land.

Sampling mainly takes place during the dry season, when access to the forest is easier, and the results have been impressive. Data from the 2024 season recorded jaguars on 23% of active cameras, with around 20 individuals identified. This confirmed that the cat has maintained a stable presence in the corridor over these four years – which, given the pressures of deforestation and potential conflict, is already a significant achievement. And it’s not only jaguars that show up on

camera. So far, 134 vertebrate species have been recorded, including other cats such as ocelots and jaguarundis, plus tapirs, capuchin monkeys and giant anteaters.

NATURE’S NEIGHBOURS

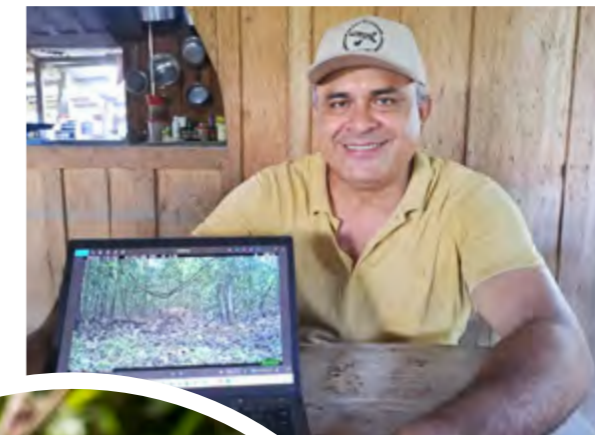
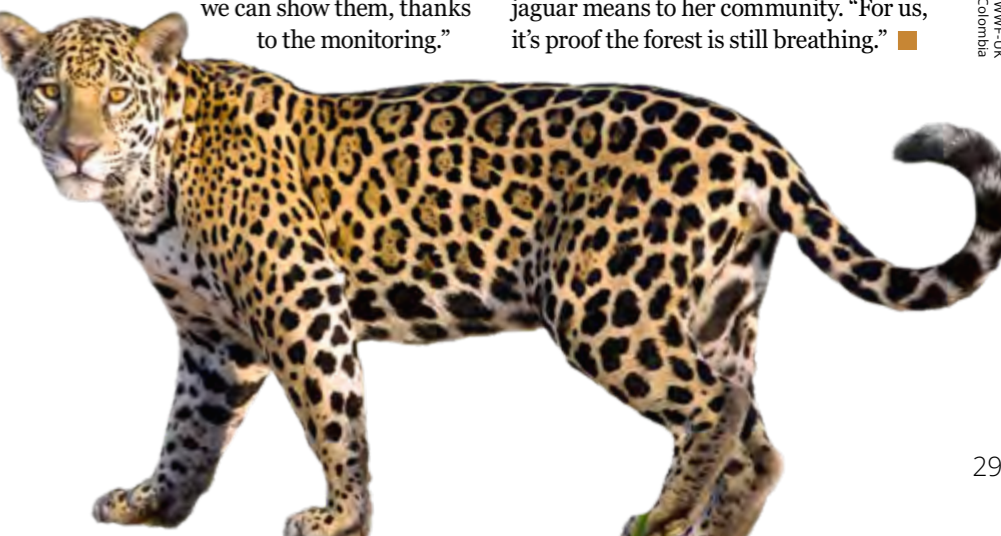
At first, the cameras were met with suspicion. But as people saw the images of wildlife on their property, attitudes started to change, bringing a new-found pride in the natural riches on their doorstep. Some who previously viewed the jaguar as a threat now want to record and protect it. “Farmers often tell us their family wants to see a jaguar, so we show them the photographs,” says Yefer. “Now people no longer think about shooting with a gun; only about shooting with a camera trap.”

The monitoring data belongs to the community, which increases their sense of ownership in the project. And this data is already proving important. By analysing camera trap photos of jaguars, the team have identified priority areas for forest

conservation and restoration along the corridor. They’ve also identified bottleneck areas, where the most jaguars are detected, so are working with people there to reduce conflict. They’ve advised livestock farmers on strategies to mitigate against jaguar attacks, including predator-proof fencing.

Meanwhile, we’re helping communities develop more sustainable livelihoods, such as farming crops like fruits and cacao, and encouraging better soil and water management. This support is helping families diversify their incomes, while learning that it’s possible to live both from nature and with nature, merging conservation and production together.

“When we welcome visitors, we show them the process we’ve gone through,” says Lucy Tovar Mejía, a member of the Jaguar Corridor Damas del Nare Lagoon. “When there are no tourists, we focus on our livelihood projects. My husband works in the fields, and I make chocolate.”



Above: Yesid Humberto Alfonso shares photos from the camera traps. Neighbours seek him out when they see a paw print so he can take photos and monitor jaguar signs



Far left: We’re supporting communities to restore forests and develop alternative livelihoods that don’t harm trees

Left: Thanks to you, we can support farmers like José Ibáñez to produce non-timber forest products such as cacao that can be sold for chocolate production

The tourism Lucy mentions is a key part of the equation, with tourists visiting Guaviare to enjoy its natural riches. Local operators offer a range of activities, including boat trips to view rare Amazon river dolphins, all of which boosts the local economy. “Someone said: you are living in absolute richness,” says Yesid Humberto Alfonso, a local promoter. “And that’s what we can show them, thanks to the monitoring.”

As WWF celebrates five years of working in the Guaviare jaguar corridor, we’ve seen a huge shift in attitudes towards jaguars. This magnificent big cat, once an object of fear and resentment, today inspires both respect and pride. And the people who share its home are finding new, sustainable ways to live alongside it.

Claudia has no doubts about what the jaguar means to her community. “For us, it’s proof the forest is still breathing.” ■

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Win a pair of Nikon sportstar EX II binoculars

Get closer than ever before!

Don't miss your chance to win a pair of brand-new binoculars. Whether you're scanning a reedbed for warblers or watching marine life on a coastal walk, the new **Nikon Sportstar EX II 8x25** and **Nikon Sportstar EX II 10x25** binoculars are designed to bring nature closer. Compact, lightweight and easy to carry, these travel-friendly ergonomic binoculars sit comfortably in your hand – ideal for long days spent wildlife-watching.

Nikon's high-quality optics provide crisp, clear images, while the 8x25 model lets you take in more of the scene thanks to its wider field of view. Built for unpredictable weather, the binoculars are waterproof and nitrogen-filled to prevent internal fogging, while rubber armour provides a secure grip.

Clever design also allows them to fold down small – perfect for slipping into a pocket or backpack on a hike. Visit nikon.co.uk for more information.

We've got **one pair of Nikon Sportstar EX II 10x25 binoculars** to give away. See the 'How to enter' box below to find out how you can enter the prize draw by email or post.



Win a summer reading bundle

Look great in accessories made from recycled ocean plastic

We're partnering with **Brothers Make** to bring you a new range of products crafted from ocean plastic waste.

Based in Bournemouth, brothers Matt and Jonny combine traditional craftsmanship with small-scale recycling technology to turn discarded everyday items – from milk bottle tops to single-use pens – into high-quality, long-lasting products.

To celebrate our new partnership, they're giving away an **exclusive pair of Loops sunglasses and matching page holder** in a new style – perfect for holding your book open. They're made from recovered ocean plastic, and if the sunglasses ever break, Brothers Make will repair or recycle them for free.

For your chance to win, see the 'How to enter' box (right) for details. Scan the QR code to watch the story of how these sunglasses are made, or visit brothersmake.com to explore the full range.



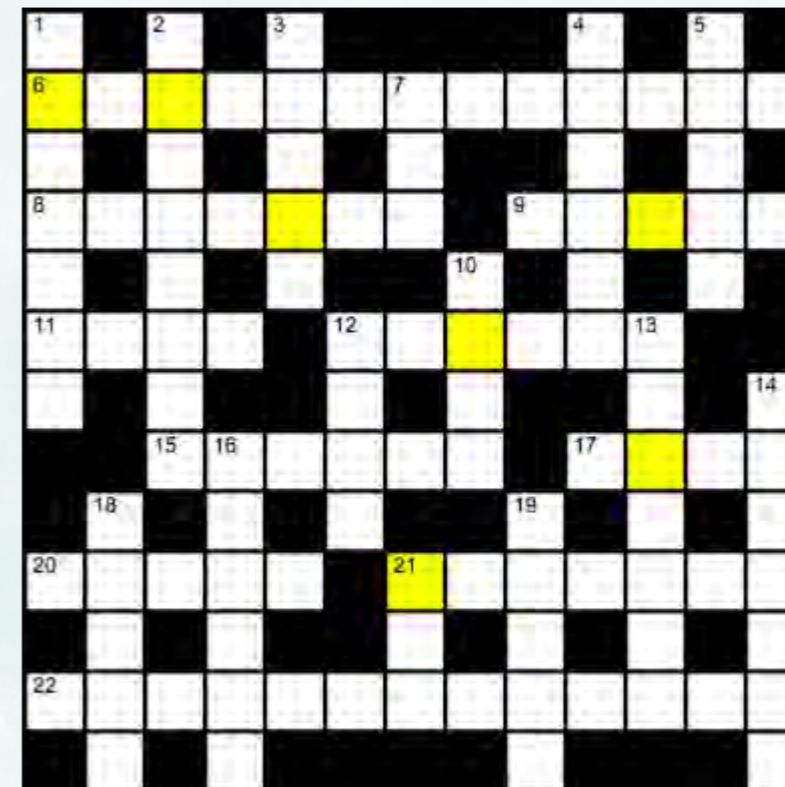
How to enter Action giveaways

Email us with your name, address and phone number, with 'Loops sunglasses', 'Nikon binoculars' or 'What makes a bird book' as the subject: competition@wwf.org.uk

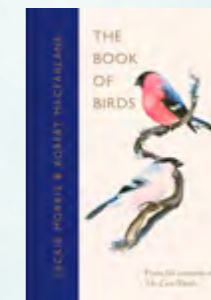
Alternatively, post your entry to **Action Magazine, WWF-UK, Living Planet Centre, Rufford House, Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 4LL.**

Closing date: Friday 24 July 2026. For full terms and conditions, visit: wwf.org.uk/compterm

Crossword



WWF ACTION CROSSWORD 63: Summer 2026 issue. Compiled by Aleric Linden



Solve our crossword and you could win a copy of **The Book of Birds** by Jackie Morris and Robert Macfarlane (*Hamish Hamilton, RRP £35 hardback*).

Clues across

- 6 Capable of decomposing naturally in the environment (13)
- 8 _ water, precious resource on tap for many but not all (7)
- 9 Organic layer spread over soil to retain moisture (5)
- 11 United _ Emirates, one of the countries where the white oryx has been reintroduced into the wild (4)
- 12 & 15 Andalusian mountain range with a namesake in California (6,6)
- 15 See 12 across
- 17 'Killer' species – largest living member of the dolphin family (4)
- 20 Large ocean inlets such as those of Mexico and Aden (5)
- 21 Common semiconductor in solar cells (7)
- 22 Shock deterrent protecting livestock from predators such as tigers and jaguars (8,5)

Clues down

- 1 This previously endangered lynx has become a conservation success story (7)
- 2 _ gorilla, rare ape of Virunga and Bwindi (8)
- 3 _ and Harris, the largest Scottish island (5)
- 4 Powerful big cat native to South American countries (6)
- 5 _ backs, subordinate male mountain gorillas (5)
- 7 Offshore oil drilling platform (3)
- 10 _ carotene, plant pigment supporting herbivore health (4)
- 12 Waters such as the Mediterranean, Baltic, etc (4)
- 13 _ wild dog, painted predator of the savannah (7)
- 14 Mount _ , this active volcano is the highest mountain in Washington State (7)
- 16 Greenhouse _ , heat-trapping process affecting climate (6)
- 18 Male elephants (5)
- 19 A precipitous habitat for nesting seabirds (5)
- 21 Endangered species of baleen whale (3)

After solving the crossword, take each letter from the shaded squares (going from left to right and top to bottom) to spell the **prize word**. To be in with a **chance to win**, just send a postcard with the prize word to the address on this page, or email it to competition@wwf.org.uk The closing date is **Friday 24 July 2026**.

Spring 2026 answers

Prize word: SEAHORSE
Across 6. South 7. Public 9. Oceania
 10. Paper 11. Haze 13. Natural
 16. Emperor 17. Star 20. Scarp
 21. Ice caps 23. Edward 24. Dodos
Down 1. Dune 2. China 3. Sulphur
 4. Elephant 5. Acorn 6. Sloths
 8. Patagonia 12. Zimbabwe
 14. Leopard 15. Crisis 18. Ashes
 19. Herds 22. AIDS

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Editor Liz Palmer
editor@wwf.org.uk
Editorial executive Emily Thomas
Senior supporter engagement manager Adam Field
Supporter engagement manager Stephen Osborne

FOR OUR MEDIA

Consultant editor Sophie Stafford
Senior art editor Nicole Mooney
Art editor Julia Young
Managing editor Hannah Fletcher
Account director Katy Hewett
Account manager Leah Goldring
Creative director Matt Pink

THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Smriti Dahal, Jasper Doest, Barney Jeffries, Charlotte Martyn, Derek Niemann, Nadeem Perera, Shreya Sethi, Louisa Streeting, Mike Unwin

NATURE'S CHAMPION

Sir David Attenborough has reached a milestone birthday, turning 100! A long-serving WWF ambassador, he's brought the extraordinary beauty and fragility of our planet into our homes for decades.

His lifelong mission to protect nature has inspired millions. And today, as wildlife and wild places face unprecedented threats, his message to take action is more urgent than ever.



For a future where people and nature thrive | wwf.org.uk

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